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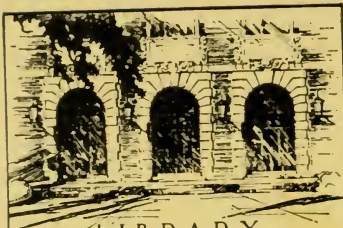
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E A T F O R D.

BEAUFORD:

OR, A

PICTURE

OF

HIGH LIFE.

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VOL. II.

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BEAUFORD:

OR, A

PICTURE

OF

HIGH LIFE.

BY HENRY CARD, M.A.

OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

His years but young, but his experience old,
His head unmellow'd, but his judgment ripe,
And, in a word, (for far behind his worth
Come all the praises that I now bestow,)
He is complete in feature, and in mind
With all good grace to grace a gentleman.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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BEAUFORD, &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

What great ones do, the less will prattle of.

SHAKESPEARE.

Et tamen, ut longé repetas, longeque revolvās

Nomen, ab infanti gentem deducis asylo.

Majorum primus quisquis fuit ille tuorum

Aut pastor fuit, aut illud quod dicere nolo.

JUVENAL.

ALTHOUGH Earl Altamont, as it has been shewn, could not brook from Charles the slightest opposition to his opinions, whether they were founded upon party prejudices and views, or upon the sounder principles of

unbiassed judgment, and had therefore determined in his own mind to leave him no room to doubt of the impossibility of continuing in his good graces, if he could not manifest a little more pliability of temper, yet it so happened, that his Lordship was obliged to postpone the lessons of obedience, which he was intent upon teaching him, in consequence of a circumstance taking place, that was as mortifying to his personal feelings, as it was unlooked for ; and to do away the annoying effects of which, he stood in the utmost need of Charles's services. The resignation of his seat in the cabinet had no sooner been notified to the Minister by Earl Altamont, than the news spread like wild-fire through the political world ; for, as these two distinguished personages had parted with each other in such a way as led them mutually to believe that they should directly be at open war against each other, the Minister was not very scrupulous in communicating to his adherents the real cause of his Lordship's secession, and which was not long confined

confined to them, but soon made known among the literary partisans of the administration. A torrent of ribaldry, in the shape of odes, epigrams, and letters mixed however with occasional strokes of pointed raillery, was poured upon his Lordship in the ministerial prints; while one who had long been at the devotion of his Lordship, but was tired out in his expectations of aggrandizement, took this opportunity of giving vent to his spleen and anger in a pamphlet, to which he prefixed as a motto Sir Robert Walpole's famous recipe for making a Patriot. "It is but refusing to gratify an unreasonable or insolent demand, and up starts a Patriot."

Now hitherto the Earl had so dexterously managed as to sail along with the tide of popular favor, even while the measures of his coadjutors had been severely reprobated. To have then the shafts of satire publicly levelled at him; to be bantered daily, and sometimes with no inconsiderable wit and humour upon the loss of the blue ribband,

was what, with all his pretensions to philosophic calmness and dignity, he could by no means bear. For his Lordship's temper, unluckily, was more susceptible of pain than of pleasure, and, as Racine used frequently to tell his son, that he was more hurt by the lowest and most contemptible pieces of criticism, than pleased by the highest and justest eulogies; so the Earl was more severely mortified by the attacks of a few insignificant writers, than delighted by the approbation of the independent and judicious. Stung therefore to the quick by these lampooners, he determined to seek relief to his uneasy mind through the medium of Charles's pen. But fearful if he betrayed his pain, he should lessen himself in the estimation of his Secretary, he artfully addressed him, to the following effect.

“ You have doubtless, Beauford, noticed in the public journals, the silly and impertinent attacks which have been made upon me since I have resigned the seals of office, and have of course concluded, that they
have

have served for my diversion, or have passed by me as the idle wind which I regard not. I should therefore unquestionably best preserve my dignity by my silence. It is however of some importance to have the voice of the public in our favor, perfectly satisfied as we may be with the uprightness of our conduct. Should no reply be offered to the falsehoods and misrepresentations which have appeared against my political character, the public, as well as my friends, will begin to consider my silence as the effect of the truth and justice of those accusations which have been so furiously heaped upon me. You shall therefore have the pleasure of undertaking my vindication; and, as the Town will take no small interest in the answer, I shall expect to see your style worthy of the subject, and the principles of your own reasoning as perspicuous as they must be conclusive. The paper which I now put into your hand, will amply furnish you with the means of rebutting the nonsensical charge of my giving
up

up the seat at the council board, in consequence of being disappointed of the vacant ribband. Here his Lordship was obliged to put his handkerchief to his face for a moment, as the consciousness of asserting an untruth, occasioned the colour to rise in his cheeks. "But," continued he, "I shall have no leisure to give you any further assistance in this production, as I shortly expect, you know, the arrival of the Duke of Glassonbury, who will be my visitor for a fortnight at least, and consequently engage my whole time. I will now only add, that as a reward for this agreeable task, which must be executed with all possible dispatch, and I again repeat with as much attention to style as to argument, I hope to be enabled to put you into parliament at the close of the next session. For I have this morning received a letter from my old friend Oglethorpe, in which he says, that his years and growing infirmities, admonish him to retire from the laborious duties of a Senator, and therefore he wishes

me

me to fix upon a new Member for the borough of Castlebar." Having thrown out this dazzling bait to Charles, which he justly calculated would excite his best efforts, the Earl withdrew.

Our readers must not suppose the mind of Charles to be so wholly absorbed in the passion of love as to be insensible to that of ambition. On the contrary, his love only served still more to inflame his soul to acquire a name, a character which, in the eyes of the world, might compensate for the adventitious advantages of rank and fortune; and render him one day worthy of the hand of Lady Emily. As this was a thought never absent from his mind, the prospect of soon obtaining a seat in parliament, while it flattered his pride, opened to him a field which would afford him at once full scope for displaying his powers as a speaker; for, though Charles, whenever he entered into an examination of his own character, was more disposed to dwell upon his defects than his good qualities, and was by no means inclined

to over-rate his acquirements, yet the effects of his modesty could not hinder him from perceiving that nature had bestowed upon him the gift of speech, that first and greatest requisite of an orator. Impressed with the deepest sentiments of gratitude for the intentions of his patron to remove him to a sphere of action equal to his ambition and genius, Charles prepared for his task with the sanguine hopes of convincing the Earl, that he was not undeserving of the generous offices which he meditated upon doing him.

Soon after this affair had been thus arranged to the satisfaction of his Lordship, the Duke of Glassonbury arrived. Tall in stature, genteel in his person, and seemingly possessed of those virtues and talents which are to be wished for in one born to so elevated a station. For several days after his arrival, all was gaiety at Beechwood. The Earl was unwearied in his assiduities to his guest, and entertained him with a splendid magnificence surpassing what he had
ever

ever before displayed. In short, no possible method was omitted to amuse and gratify the Duke during his stay. Nor was it to be imagined that the Earl would abate in any of his attentions, when he found that the ends to which they were subservient were likely to be effected. To other eyes, besides those of his Lordship, it was soon apparent that the Duke did not contemplate with indifference the great personal attractions of Lady Emily. Yet, beautiful and accomplished as she was, he would never have thought of endeavouring to obtain the chief place in her affections, if she had not been the heiress of the Earl of Altamont; since merit of any kind was not an equivalent in the judgment of this nobleman for the want of ancestry and fortune.

In a very different point of view, however, from the father, did the daughter behold the Duke of Glassonbury. She allowed him to be handsome, and thought him tolerably agreeable; but when she compared his pretensions in both respects to those of Charles,

she felt that they could not be placed on the same level. Indeed, as to the latter, she had for some time brought herself to believe, that the powers of fascination in his manners and conversation could not be equalled. But singular to relate, what excited in her a secret dislike to his Grace, was that which it might naturally have been supposed, as it bore a close affinity to one of her own prejudices, she would have most valued him for ——; his excessive family pride. He was so fond of alluding to the illustrious line from which he was descended, that one morning her Ladyship, laughingly, told him, that in genealogical knowledge, he was a match for the whole College of Heralds put together. But not content with displaying this sort of harmless vanity, the Duke affected to style all those who could not blazon their coat of arms at least with three descents, by the title *de gens de bas lieu*. And, he mortally offended Lady Emily, by asking her on the second day that he had seen Charles, if he was not
one

one of those *gens de bas lieu*, who, having no stake or interest in the country, yet looked forward one day, as so many of them now did, to fill the first offices in the state.

As for Charles, it may be readily concluded, in the present state of his feelings towards Lady Emily, that the visit of the Duke of Glas-sonbury contributed not a little to disturb his mind. For though in his solitary moments, his breast was calmed and composed by the consciousness of being beloved, yet when he reflected on the probability of the Duke's becoming enamoured with her Ladyship, and the certainty of his wishes being seconded by parental entreaties, and if that would not do, by parental menaces, he felt he had just cause to tremble. Even then, if his Grace had treated him with marked distinction, instead of entirely overlooking him as he did, we cannot suppose it natural for Charles to have entertained any great predilection in his favor. Thus circumstanced, Charles felt it a sort of happiness,
that

that the Duke's character and talents were not of that stamp, as to extort his admiration. Since, notwithstanding the Earl's pompous eulogium upon his noble visitor's understanding and knowledge, and taste in the fine arts, that quick penetration which Charles possessed, and which enabled him to estimate the acquirements of others by a kind of intuition, made him presently see the Duke in his just proportion and features. He found him shallow, opinionative, and insufferably conceited. Thinking, because he had obtained the common cant of *virtú*, and had beheld the finest monuments of art in Italy, he was a perfect connoisseur in sculpture and painting;—and pretending, because he had visited the chief courts of Europe, thoroughly to understand the character and interests of its different sovereigns;—while he was quite certain that he comprehended the political state of their countries, without having studied in the least the condition of society, the real situation of the civil and ecclesiastical aristocracies,

cies, and of the rights and feelings of the people ; respecting each of which he was as profoundly ignorant of, as of the causes of national wealth, the theory of taxation, and the consequences of the public debt.

Consistently with his Grace's exclusive regard for those who were made "of the porcelain clay of the earth," and his wish to have them sustain the dignity of their rank by keeping aloof from all mixed society, it was one of the favorite topics of conversation with this great lover of aristocracy, to inveigh against the large assemblies of his country, which to be pleasing to the man of high birth, the proscription of the bourgeois from them ought, in his opinion, to have been as rigidly adhered to as it was by the old German, Spanish, and French nobility. One morning, while he was descanting upon this subject with unusual vehemence, and comparing the routs of the present days to a sort of coffee-houses, where good and bad company mix indiscriminately, and where every one is admitted who is well dressed, Miss Upgrove's

Uppgrove's name was announced ; when, as soon as the Duke had been introduced to her, and Lady Emily expressed her happiness to see her look so well, after her late excursion from home, Lady Meeresfield, who was in the room, said, " You have come just in time, Miss Uppgrove, to defend our crowded assemblies. Here has been the Duke protesting against them for half an hour, and asserting that society now-a-days for the want of its being select, is nothing more than a masquerade, in which none appears in a dress suitable to their rank and character."

" Mercy on us," exclaimed Miss Uppgrove, raising up her eyes in the most affected manner, " why, his Grace surely cannot reflect, that the abolition of our promiscuous assemblies would prove as fatal to the happiness of us fine ladies, as the shutting up of the Theatres, or the Opera House. For my part, next to a ball, I freely confess my delight is a promiscuous assembly, which one can leave as late or soon as it suits our humour ;
and

and where one can talk or be silent as long as we please, without being taxed either for loquacity or stupidity, either of which enviable privileges could never be enjoyed in a *coterie*. While the motley group one meets with, afford as much entertainment as the very bustle of the scene has in it something sprightly and amusing. In the name then of many fashionable females of my acquaintance, I ask what substitute you would provide, my Lord, in the place of these delightful meetings."

"I suppose," observed Lady Emily, with a sarcastic tone of voice, although she felt that in some respects he spoke her sentiments, "his Grace would require the females of rank in this country to spend their time as the princesses did in the days of Homer—superintending their domestic concerns, or else in making clothes for those of their family. Perhaps, he would desire to see us employed, like Andromache, about works of embroidery, or would have us work complete sets of furniture, in imitation of our great
grand-

grand mothers. Possibly, his Grace might wish us, in order to become more suitable companions for his sex, to devote our leisure to the study of the dead languages ; and thus render Greek and Latin as fashionable with our Court Ladies, as it was in the days of Elizabeth. Though, upon second thoughts, I very much doubt, after the ridicule which the inimitable Moliere has thrown upon female pedantry, whether the boldest of us would now have the courage to sit down to learn Greek or Latin. But as his Grace seems to regard us as so many *Pandoras*, I durst say, he will have the goodness to inform us in what way we may pass our time with the least mischief to ourselves, and the most benefit to the community."

" Cease, my dear Lady Emily," replied the Duke, endeavouring to conceal his vexation at her remarks, under an air of affected good humour and gallantry, " or else I shall be quite overpowered by your raillery. For really it is doing me a great piece of injustice to entertain the notion of my wishing to represent

represent the loveliest part of the creation as so many *Pandoras*, when I regard your sex not only as the life, but the ornament, of society; and hold the man who is insensible to their company, no friend to human nature. In short, we cannot be completely happy, (I am sure I forcibly feel the truth of what I am saying;)" here the Duke fixed his eyes upon Lady Emily, "without being in their society.—All then which I meant to affirm was, that if women of condition lived a little more in the shade than they do, we should be as delighted with their talents as before, and have less suspicion of their purity."

"By this last sentence," said Miss Upgrove, "I suppose the Duke intends to insinuate, that it is in a crowd our morals are in danger, and therefore that we ought to avoid it as much as we would a contagious air."

"I really do not see," replied the Duke, "by what other means you could bring about, between the high born and the low

born, in ordinary intercourse, that desirable separation, the want of which is the sole cause of the good society in this country being so inferior to that of France, under the old monarchy."

"Well," rejoined Miss Upgrove, "I must still think, that if this unsocial system of exclusion were to be effected, you would destroy what constitutes the charm of society;—that freedom of manner and gaiety of heart; without making any improvement either in our morals, or refinement of taste. But surely, your Grace, there must be some other reasons than the one which you have just assigned, why what is called good company in England should be wanting in those charms and attractions which were constantly to be found under the old regime. Come, Mr. Beauford, you, I dare say, though I cannot, will be able to confirm my conjectures upon this point."

Charles had entered the room a few minutes before this conversation had commenced, where he had remained in expectation

tion of Lord Altamont's coming, silent and attentive to the question in debate, but without the least inclination to take a share in it. But, being called upon in this particular manner to deliver his opinion, he thought if he did not give it, he might be suspected of being over-awed by this child of greatness : He therefore said, " It appears to me, in the first place, utterly impossible, from the great wealth and commanding influence of the mercantile classes in the state, to render society very select in this country."

" You are in the common opinion, I perceive," said the Duke, petulantly interrupting him, " that an English Commoner may rival an English Nobleman in influence, provided their fortunes be equal."

" If that be the common opinion, my Lord Duke," replied Charles, " I am not much inclined to depart from it.—But to return to your question, Miss Upgrove. The principal cause, it seems to me, of society arriving to that excellence under the ancient
c 2 govern-

government of France was, that there the men of the highest consideration had scarcely any thing of so much importance to attend to as society ; while the leading men in this country are for the most part so occupied by the great political discussions of the day, as to lose that keen relish for it ; or, if they do come into it, it is not with the intention to amuse and to inform, but rather to unbend and to be diverted. Here, our men of consequence, either by their rank, talents, or opulence, are engrossed with the busy scenes of public life, in which they cannot acquire distinction without watchful days and sleepless nights ; whereas, the men of rank in France were mere cyphers in the State, and had thus full leisure to carry the arts of refinement and politeness to a surprising pitch of perfection, and to create for themselves a society the most polished upon earth ;—or, if they had any views of ambition to forward, whether the motives of them were patriotic or selfish, they were obliged to

to have recourse to such debasing practices to ensure their success, as the least scrupulous character, in a free and popular government, would disdain to resort to. In a word, the drawing rooms of our great, would be enlivened with epigrammatic wit, and have the most elegant sallies of thought and fine effusions of fancy displayed in them, if the civil and religious liberties of this country were gone ;—if those passions which decide the fate of nations were lost in one general undistinguishing servitude ;—if there were no other passport to political distinction or to a brilliant literary reputation, but what is to be found within the very limited sphere of private society.”

“ Upon my word,” replied the Duke, while his looks bespoke all the inherent haughtiness of his temper, “ I was totally unprepared for this blaze of eloquence which is quite sufficient to confound a man who is no orator. Nevertheless, I see not but you have left the argument just as I took it up, and

and therefore the dispute must end in only confirming me more strongly in my own opinions.

At this moment a servant entered to inform Charles, that my Lord waited for him in the private library, when Charles, without stopping to make any reply to this ironical speech of the Duke's, immediately quitted the room. The instant he was gone, the Duke turned round to Lady Emily, with a pretended careless air, and said, How long has *this young man* been in the employ of your father. He seems quite a professed talker."

"This young man, as you are pleased to term him," replied Lady Emily, assuming a loftiness of temper fully equal to his own, "or, as we more properly chuse to call him, this gentleman, has now filled the station of private Secretary to my Father for some time, and has hitherto been addressed by the whole of this family, with every expression of respect, and
even

even of regard, to which his virtues so justly entitle him ; while he is allowed by all competent judges," laying a great stress upon these words, " to be no less distinguished for his literary attainments, than for his extraordinary powers of conversation ; — a specimen of which he has now just afforded your Grace, that will make you cautious how you enter again the lists with so formidable an antagonist."

" I am indeed fully sensible," replied the Duke, with an air of ostentatious modesty, " upon what a slippery ground I stand, when I venture to differ from Mr. Beauford or your Ladyship. To be a match, therefore, for either of you, I perceive I must henceforth study to deliver the reflections which my little knowledge and short experience have occasionally suggested to me, according to the rules of logic, and to the arts of rhetoric."

Here Lady Emily was going to reply, when Mrs. Eaglehurst and her son entered,
upon

upon which the Duke took the opportunity of retiring to his apartment, bursting with vexation, and pouring out execrations against the whole female sex, but against Lady Emily in particular ; thus strongly exemplifying in his conduct, the trite but just observation, that where men complain without cause, they generally complain without temper.

CHAP. XV.



Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth ;
In voices well divulged, free, learn'd and valiant,
And, in dimension and the shape of nature,
A gracious person ; but yet I cannot love him :
He might have took his answer long ago.

SHAKESPEARE.

.....

Let high birth triumph ! What can be more great ?
Nothing—but merit in a low estate.

YOUNG.



WITH whatever indignation, the Duke received Lady Emily's rebuke ; how difficult soever this proud man felt it, to continue his self-command upon that occasion, yet

so far was her conduct from stifling his rising passion, that it served rather to add fuel to the flame. In the calmer moments of reflexion, he thought there was something generous and even dignified in the extending of her protection to Charles ; nor did the haughty mode in which she defended him, aggravate the offence, as pride almost of every kind was regarded by him, as a sort of virtue, and therefore, deemed an indispensable requisite in the female whom he should honor with his hand.

Instead then of departing at the end of the fortnight, according to his first intentions, he protracted his stay at the pressing intreaties of the Earl, for a considerable period ; during which, he had frequent, or rather constant, opportunities of being with Lady Emily ; and the more he studied her character, the more positive was he, that she possessed those qualities, mental and personal, which were calculated to adorn, beyond any other woman he had seen, the title of the Duchess of Glassonbury. For, it

so happened, that none of those delays which are so common to most lovers in the road to the gratification of their desires, was experienced by the Duke. A few days after his arrival, Mr. Featherweight, in a fit of despair, had left Beechwood, not being able with all his self-conceit, to flatter himself he had made so deep an impression upon Lady Emily's heart, that she would sacrifice the Duke for his sake;—while Oswald, whose love of variety could keep him stationary at no place for any length of time, had, in spite of all his mother's wishes for him to remain with her, winged his flight to Cheltenham. Thus the Duke was constantly by her side, as Mrs. Eaglehurst, on ascertaining that she beheld him with indifference, seldom joined them in their walks or rides, lest the Earl might suppose her presence operated as a restraint upon the Duke in introducing those subjects the most adapted to insinuate himself into the good graces of his daughter.

In

In the mean time, Charles had finished the pamphlet which was to rescue his Patron from the degrading imputation of being influenced by the loss of a ribband, to resign his Office ; and so delighted was my Lord with the execution of it, that when he had run through it, he could not help exclaiming to Charles, who waited in the room, with no ordinary solicitude, for his opinion, “ Upon my word, Beauford, you have surpassed my most sanguine expectations, insomuch that I have no hesitation to say, that could I have found leisure to set down to this undertaking, *I question very much if I myself could have done it better.*”

Indeed, the pamphlet was written with those powers of thought and language, that fully entitled it to the encomiums of his Lordship. Its author began by saying, “ That as the character of the noble Earl had been attacked with the weapon of ridicule, he should defend it with that of argument ; and, in fighting this battle, he entertained no
doubt

doubt but that his weapon would be allowed to be the most effective by all but those, whose judgments were warped by personal animosity, biassed by undue influence, or obscured by party prejudice." After dexterously interpreting the obloquy cast upon his Lordship's character, and circulated with such unrelenting malignity into an incontestible proof and envy of his superior capacity, and forcibly exposing the arts to which he owed his defamation, he then entered at once upon the cause of the Earl's disagreement with the Minister, which was shewn to have no connection with any disappointment about the vacant ribband, but to have arisen entirely upon a great political regulation. The real subject of this difference was next stated and discussed under all its various ramifications. And as the Earl well knew that the subject then entered upon was the most vulnerable part of the Administration, and which least met with the public approbation, he revenged himself for the offence given to him by the Minister, by
directing

directing Charles to treat this matter at length, and with all possible keenness and vehemence. Some severe remarks were therefore made upon the folly and injustice of those who could so far listen to the tongue of slander, as to believe, that a Nobleman, whose tenor of public conduct had uniformly evinced that he had nothing so deeply at heart as the interests of the people, could, for the sake of a ribband, relinquish his situation, if he had not been convinced of the impossibility of retaining it with honor to himself, or benefit to his country. The tract was concluded by some finely turned compliments to his Lordship's love and patronage of letters, a subject upon which Charles expatiated for several pages, as it was so susceptible of the embellishments of eloquence, and with the confident prediction, that when the voice of truth and reason had silenced the clamours of interested faction, the very act for which his Lordship had been censured, ridiculed, misrepresented, and calumniated by so many, would

would command the praise and admiration of all. But though Charles had finished his task, yet that scarcely helped to lessen the number of his employments. For, as Earl Altamont was now about to connect himself closely with the leaders of the opposition, various letters had passed between them on high political matters ; in which our readers may imagine, from the pretty correct estimate they are now enabled to form of his Lordship's character, that he was extremely anxious his written style should not detract from his reputation as a Speaker. Those too, who had hitherto so cordially approved of the principles upon which he had acted, were to be addressed in separate and artful letters, according to the measure of their power and discrimination, lest the confidence which they had reposed in his virtues and character, should be shook by the new and unexpected step which he had taken. Under the pretext therefore of enabling Charles to acquire that knowledge of the world which experience can alone communicate, and to afford

afford him a closer view of the excellencies of his new associates, his Lordship evinced such uncommon kindness, as to permit him to cast his verbal communications into a proper epistolary form.

Thus Charles's time was so occupied, that except at the hour of dinner, he seldom or ever caught a glimpse of Lady Emily ; yet, when he did see her, he had the ineffable satisfaction to perceive, from the peculiar manner in which she addressed him, since there is no mistaking the language of real emotion, that he stood as high as ever in her good opinion. Had he entertained, however, any alarming fears upon that head, they would have been amply quieted by subsequent circumstances. One morning, when Lady Emily had engrossed an unusual share of the Duke's attention, and she, without the least thoughts of coquetting, was inspired with the innocent desire of pleasing him, he suddenly stepped up to her, on Lady Meeresfield's leaving the room, and taking her shrinking hand, exclaimed with rapture, " Idol of my soul,

soul, let me seize this auspicious moment of pouring out the effusions of a heart, which here vows the most unalterable attachment to your beauty and merit." The surprise and confusion of Lady Emily at these words, rendered her for a few moments speechless; for though not a day passed without her receiving some compliments from the Duke, yet as he picqued himself not a little upon his fine-breeding and address, her good sense never allowed her to over-rate the value of expressions, which almost common courtesy would have exacted from one who made less pretensions to the character of a finished gentleman. Before she had recovered from her embarrassment, and was enabled to answer him, her aunt returned into the room, as suddenly as she quitted it; when Lady Emily, without looking or speaking to the Duke, hastily withdrew in much inward perturbation of mind, as she saw at once all the unhappy consequences that would result from his declaration.

When left at liberty to pursue her meditations upon this subject, she resolved, as the most effectual expedient to prevent the reiteration of the Duke's sentiments, to behave to him with all imaginable coldness the next time that she came into his company. But this prudent design was entirely defeated by the excessive self-admiration of his Grace, which led him to interpret this alteration of her conduct into that reserve and delicacy so naturally to be looked for in one, on the eve of expecting a declaration from the man, for whom, of all others, she had the strongest predilection.

Under this deceitful impression, the Duke did not again attempt to make any serious love to her Ladyship, but he did what more decidedly shewed his conviction of having captivated her ;—he took the first opportunity of soliciting her hand in the most formal manner of her father, and when he saw, from the joy which sparkled in his Lordship's eyes how acceptable his proposal was to him, so confident did he feel it would prove equally agreeable

agreeable to the Lady, that he earnestly begged that no unnecessary delay might take place on his Lordship's part, as it should be his pleasing task to expedite the lawyers.

Inexpressibly gratified with this offer, Lord Altomont, the instant the conversation had terminated, sought his daughter, to acquaint her with it. He found her alone. Without any long prefacing, he opened the business, securely indulging in the belief, that as the Duke was so interesting in her eyes, she would feel no less honoured than pleased with the communication he was about to make. But scarcely had he entered upon this subject, than she instantly exclaimed, while her pallid countenance bespoke the agitation of her mind, “ Oh, my beloved father, you surely will not render your daughter for ever miserable, by uniting her to one who has not the smallest place in her affections.”

If the lightning of heaven had at that moment struck her to the ground, the Earl could not have been more petrified with

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astonish-

astonishment than he was at this reply. After a long and terrifying pause, during which he surveyed her with a scrutinizing glance, as if he would read her very soul, he said, “ Had any other lips but your own pronounced what I have just now heard, I should have answered, it was fancy, not fact. But confirmed as your refusal of the Duke is by your own mouth, I know not in what language to convey my feelings of surprise and indignation at your conduct. For where, I demand is Glassonbury’s superior in rank and fortune, or his equal in person, manners, and accomplishments? Highly as you may have been taught to value your own attractions, yet the world will tell you, at least that part of it whose judgment you are bound to prize, that he is a lover in every way deserving of your favour—But pray, let me hear what are your objections to the Duke?”

“ I can feel them,” replied Lady Emily, “ much better than I can explain them. I have, my Lord, I know not from whence it may be traced, acquired that sort of fastidious refinement in my taste, which forces me to draw

draw a broad line of distinction between characters which those around me see with the same eyes. It is not enough for me to become enamoured with a man, in whom I discern some virtues and no vices. There must be a certain elegance, animation, and grace in his good qualities to captivate my heart. Now, in all these pleasing characteristics, the Duke is, in my opinion, lamentably deficient. But as the same behaviour will produce very different effects on different minds, so it is very possible that my objections to his Grace would be unnoticed or unheeded by others. Yet, as I best understand my own character and feelings, so, I hope, I may be allowed, without presumption, to be the fittest judge of the object most suited to engage my affections. Call then these peculiarities in my character by what name you please, yet it will be still undeniably true, that their influence on my future happiness or misery are greater than I can well describe. Were my dearest father, however, by any extraordinary misfortune reduced to a state which had the
most

most distant approach to poverty, I am persuaded I should not then be wanting in that fit sense of filial duty, as to hesitate sacrificing my feelings to his wants and wishes. But, as you are the rich Earl of Altamont, and have ever encouraged me to think, that the voice of parental authority should never influence my choice of a husband, I hope you will forgive me when I say, with the utmost explicitness, that be the virtues of the Duke of Glassonbury what they may, I can never accept his hand, because I can never love him."

"Away with these fantastical and romantic sentiments," answered the Earl, with a look of disgust, "which are only to be met with in the description of the novellist and poet. And take it from me as an oracle, on which you may place implicit reliance, that such a distempered state of mind as you are in, will, if not timely checked, totally disqualify you for the part in life which you are destined to act. Hasten then to get rid of this loathsome disease ; and by way of accelerating

terating your radical cure, fix your thoughts upon the glorious conquest which you have now made, and never doubt you will reach the pinnacle of human happiness, in being united to the Duke of Glassonbury. For what does happiness consist in?—I mean that happiness which ought to be the object of your desires. Is it not to be the wife of him who is observed by all the world? Who is courted, flattered, and caressed in very the first circles; who is surrounded by persons eager to serve him, scarcely without any other recompence but the vanity or honor of obliging him; and, who is of consequence, even in the *presence*. This will be your glory, this will be your happiness on becoming the wife of Glassonbury. Acknowledge then with gratitude my great affection for you, in having selected such a man for your husband, that half of your sex will almost die with envy, when they hear your nuptials have taken place.”

“Never, never, my father, will that day arrive,” cried Lady Emily, with a solemnity
which

which startled him. "Hitherto it has been the delight of my life to obey all your commands ; but,

" 'Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perked up in a glittering grief
And wear a golden sorrow."

Which would infallibly be my fate, were I to become the envied Duchess of Glassonbury."

"Rhapsody and chimera," replied the Earl, with increasing anger of countenance. "Better to be lowly born;—now, by heaven, if I thought the wretched stuff you have just uttered, was the real deliberate conviction of your heart, I would banish you for ever from my sight, as utterly unworthy to be called my daughter. When you know, or are to know, for I will not affect to wear any disguise with you, that such is my patrician pride, I could wish, in the true spirit of aristocracy, that inter-marriages between the
nobles

nobles and plebeians in this country were prohibited, as they were in the primitive government of Rome. I would, therefore, have my daughter to be of that temper and turn of mind, who could admire, instead of ridiculing, the proud spirit of the female, who is recorded in Colbert's Political Testament to have died of vexation within the year, because she was forced by her parents to marry a man of inferior rank and origin. Better to be lowly born," reiterated the Earl, "Why what is it, do you imagine, that gives you distinction, preeminence in society; makes you listened to with attention in the very first company, and all around you anxious to forward your inclinations, anticipate your wishes, and humour your foibles and caprice? in short, makes you as much an object of adulation with learned men, as with foplings and courtlings? Do you suppose that all this is owing to your beauty, your genius, or your wit? If you do, you are most egregiously mistaken. For strip you of your title, and the consequent notion of being the heiress of Earl Al-

tamont,

tainont, and you will presently find, the same beings who are now so ready to admire you, nay almost to worship you, will be the first to treat you with vulgar scorn and familiar insolence; and in less than a month, you would be as little remembered, in the upper end of the world, as if you had never existed."

"My Lord," replied Lady Emily, "I was never suspected by you before, of undervaluing the advantages of high birth."

"Shew me then at once," rejoined the Earl, "that you estimate them in the light you should, by authorizing me to tell the Duke that you accept his proposals."

"Oh, my father," replied Lady Emily, affectionately taking his hand and pressing it within her's, "let me conjure you to avoid an error too common among parents in disposing of their children; ——— that of wishing to realize their own notions of happiness, and not those of their children. No wonder then if marriages thus brought about, end in disappointment, as they begun in misconception.

conception. I dare not, therefore, for both our sakes, add my name to the list of them. But though I cannot barter my happiness for greatness of any kind, yet I can faithfully promise never to accept an offer of this nature, which does not meet your entire approbation."

"You have spoken; now hear me," said the Earl, with an air of assumed calmness, while his whole frame shook with passion. "I will give you a fortnight to recover your senses; when, if you do not in that time consent to this inestimable alliance, I shall take the necessary steps for appointing my cousin Eaglehurst and Oswald the heirs to my landed possessions. Your mother's jointure will then be your sole support; and even that will be too large for one who possesses the grovelling soul of the daughter of a low-born mechanic, instead of the aspiring mind that is fit for one who moves in an elevated sphere of life. With that pittance, you may retire to some obscure corner of the earth, and there pine away and die, forgotten by all, and
lamented

lamented by none." So saying, he flung himself out of the apartment in a violent rage; when Lady Emily, with a deep sigh, exclaimed, "Oh Beauford, Beauford, what a struggle have you cost me; never till this hour did I know how much I loved you."

CHAP. VIII.

MISS BEAUFORD'S LETTER.

THE day on which the important conversation just related to took place between the Earl and Lady Emily, Charles received a letter from his sister, every line of which deeply interested his feelings, while some parts of it excited in him the most poignant grief. The whole letter, indeed, conveys such a just idea of the amiable and delicate features of the mind of this young lady, of whom our readers know little more than that she was fixed in Yorkshire, by the manœuvres of

Mrs.

Mrs. Eaglehurst, that, though long, we shall, for their satisfaction, give it entire. It begun as follows :

“ MY DEAREST BROTHER,

“ I am utterly at a loss to what cause to ascribe your taciturnity ; except that I know it would be the height of injustice to impute it to a decline of fraternal affection. Nevertheless, though you have of late been rather an irregular correspondent, owing, I suppose, to the hurry of business, or to the gay society with which you are surrounded, yet I do not remember that so long an interval of silence has passed between us since our separation. I beg, therefore, that you will epistolize me quickly, if it be only to say that you are well. For till then, I am left to the workings of my own fancy, which conjures up a thousand frightful phantoms ; since, truth to say, my spirits have of late undergone so material a change, though to what cause to attribute it, I am as unable as to account for your silence, that at times, I
might

might be taken for the very figure of melancholy.

“ You must not be surprised from the pensive mood into which I have lately fallen, that the style of this letter is tinged with it, as a river, they say, tastes of the soil through which it last flowed. Indeed, I should be ashamed of my insensibility, if I could display my former animation and sprightliness, were I ever so much inclined to do it, whilst the following reports remain uncontradicted.

“ I was lately in company with a gentleman, who read to me a letter, giving an account of the very curious escape which a relative of his had made from Bourdeaux, where, as he affirmed, several English gentlemen had been arrested, and some of them removed, God knows whither, upon the suspicion of their being spies of this country. Now, how far this person's veracity, in point of circumstances, may be safely trusted, is for you, not me, to determine. But you cannot wonder that I should be filled with
inexpressible

inexpressible anxiety at this account, when I tell you, that Bourdeaux was the very place whence our beloved uncle dated his last letter to me."

"Upon my return home too, 'as misfortunes,' according to the observation of our immortal bard, 'never come in single files,' whilst I was pondering upon this alarming intelligence, I took up, scarcely knowing what I was about, the York newspaper; when the first paragraph which met my eye was this: — 'We are truly concerned to inform our readers, that four gentlemen, who had been making the tour of the Orkney Islands, were all lost in entering the Pentland Frith, where the violence of the current is known to be such, that a vessel is oftentimes stopt upon meeting the tide, and carried back with all her sails set. One of these drowned persons, was a clergyman, of the name of Ainsworth, who, we understand, was no less distinguished in the University of Oxford for his numerous virtues than for his literary attainments.'

"Now,

“ Although I had not the pleasure of being acquainted with this gentleman, yet, from the great respect which you and my uncle bore to him, and having heard you say how deeply you were indebted to his instructions, I cannot help deploring his untimely fate, as much as if it had been that of an intimate friend. Perhaps it is to these two distressing events, that I must attribute your silence. Yet surely that ought not to excuse you writing to a sister, who, though she cannot relieve, can sympathize in all the sorrows of her brother ; and whose heart, ever since she knew what affection was, has been unalterably devoted to his happiness.

“ But let me endeavour to get rid of this melancholy strain, and touch upon other subjects not so gloomy and afflictive. Yet, why should I affect to be cheerful and happy, when I am truly wretched ? Why should I not say thus much to you ? Why should I be deprived of the privilege of unburdening my feelings to the best of brothers and of friends. I did not intend to have used such strong expres-

sions; but now they are put down, I will not erase them, lest you should think something worse than the reality.

“ Without further circumlocution, you are to know, that there is a gentleman lately returned from the Continent, whose fine estates lying contiguous to those of Mrs. Dudley’s have paved the way for his introduction to her family. For it is a sentiment, which is always in the mouth of my protectress, that a prudent mother, who has three daughters to establish in the world, which is her case, should admit no young men within her doors but those who live in well furnished houses, keep good tables, and can command handsome equipages.

“ Now, as this gentleman has, according to common reports, a superabundance of wealth, and is, besides, young, well-looking, sensible, and accomplished, his visits, which, of late, have been pretty frequent, prove equally agreeable to Mrs. Dudley and her daughters. His name is Warpdale, I hope you will not start at it as he did at mine, when
when

when Mrs. Dudley said, ‘ give me leave, to introduce you to Miss Beauford.’ He presently, however, recovered from his embarrassment; though whenever I was addressed by my name, he involuntarily started, as if there was something ominous in it. The next time he called, which was soon afterwards, he took an opportunity, I understand, of asking Mrs. Dudley, if I had not a brother who was educated at Christ Church; and upon being told that I had, he answered, ‘ I thought so, from the striking resemblance he bears to his sister. Pray do you often see him here?’ When, upon Mrs. Dudley’s saying, that she never yet had enjoyed that pleasure, in consequence of your situation with Earl Altamont, he immediately dropt all further enquiries about you.

“ Since his residence at Oak Hall, the name of his seat, not a day has passed without our seeing him. Now, my temper, I believe, is not very susceptible of vanity; and I am not apt, like some of my sex, to mistake the civilities of a well-bred man for

proofs of secret regard. But it would be worse than affectation, it would be downright hypocrisy, were I to say that Mr. Warpdale has not been very particular in his attentions to me. Indeed, they began to be so obvious to all here, that if they had not been checked by a very inexplicable circumstance, I doubt whether the eldest Miss Dudley would have been able to restrain herself within the bounds of common politeness in her behaviour towards me, and I am quite certain, that Mrs. Dudley conceiving her projects defeated of bringing about a match between Mr Warpdale and her daughter, would have treated him with that coldness and neglect, that his pride, of which he seems to possess no small share, would have obliged him to discontinue his visits.

“The circumstance to which I allude is this. A little boy came here about a week ago to pass his vacation, who happening to be unusually noisy in playing with his top while Mr. Warpdale was present, one of the Miss Dudley's desired him to be quiet; when

Mrs.

Mrs. Dudley said, let him alone, let him enjoy himself while he can; his holidays will soon be over, and then his hours of sorrows will return. This observation produced a long dispute upon the hackenied subject of the misery or felicity of school-boys. In the course of it, Mr. Warpdale said, that if he were called upon to fix a period when a youth was most happy, he should select that one when his removal to the university took place; when he was freed from the capricious tyranny of a pedagogue; when he had plenty of money in his pocket; no trials to struggle with, and no worldly anxieties upon his mind. But are there not, answered I, to be found in a college life, the same jealousies, the same envyings, and the same despicable and wicked arts to circumvent the rising reputation of those who are only hated for their superior merits, as are said to exist in all schools? At this simple question, Mr. Warpdale turned as pale as the bust which stood on the pedestal near him; and in a voice half suppressed, while his eyes were rivetted

rivettèd on mine, he said, What do you mean, Madam? then instantly making an effort to recover himself, he said, I beg your pardon, I did not exactly know what I was uttering. These vertigoes in my head sometimes come upon me, so as to bereave me of all recollection of what I am saying or doing. I shall be better when I am in the open air; when he left the room, and soon afterwards returned home.

“ Ever since this conversation, Mr. Warpdale has studiously avoided me, though at times, he casts upon me a look so truly mournful and heart-stricken, that I cannot help feeling a very sensible concern upon his account. I think I hear my brother say, beware Louisa of indulging in the sympathetic passions, and remember how nearly pity is allied to love. But surely it does not follow, because I wish to see a person wear a less dejected countenance, that I am therefore to take a deep interest in his happiness. I am certain, at least, that my brother will not draw this ill-founded conclusion. Nor
5 will

will he hastily believe, that I would venture to dispose of my affections to any one whom I was not quite confident would hold a high place in his esteem and regard ; since every act of my life must have convinced him, that the first wish of my heart has been to obtain his approbation. Now I cannot help being prepossessed with a notion, that in some way or another Mr. Warpdale has incurred your dislike. Should my fears prove right, I mean my conjectures, he may rest assured that he has forfeited my good opinion for ever.

“ Having thus laid open my whole heart to you, I shall only add, that a visit from you would contribute not a little to raise my spirits ; but perhaps the request is unreasonable. At all events, let me know when Mrs. Eaglehurst talks of leaving Beechwood ; for my situation here grows every day more irksome ; insomuch that the approbation of my own conscience cannot ensure the tranquillity of my mind. Farewell,

well, my dearest brother; my paper does not allow me room to add my unnecessary name, and still more unnecessary professions of inviolable affection."

CHAP. XIII.



When desp'rate ills demand a speedy cure,
Distrust is cowardice, and prudence folly.

DR. JOHNSON.



THOUGH nature had endowed Charles with an intrepidity and firmness of nerves, which enabled him to maintain his presence of mind when the crisis was at hand, when the immediate approach of danger required him to act, yet she had not denied him that full measure of sensibility, without which a man may be respectable, but never truly amiable or interesting. Intensely alive to all the emotions of friendship, Charles shut himself
up

up in his room the whole day, to bewail the loss of his invaluable friend Mr. Aimworth ; and as he was deeply attached to his uncle by every tie of gratitude as well as of affection, he requested Lord Altamont to write to the secretary of state, to enquire whether or not he had received any intimation of the arrest of some English gentlemen at Bourdeaux, that being the place whence his uncle had addressed his last letter to him.

The situation too of his sister, for whom he entertained that devotedness of affection, which seldom fails to exist with the virtuously disposed, who have been educated together, filled him with the liveliest concern ; since, from the tendency of her letter, he saw that, without being the least aware of it, she was in some degree fascinated with Warpdale. Charles could not, however, forget the malicious trick he had played him at college, and which led him to think, perhaps, somewhat too rashly, that he had a heart incapable of tenderness. Loving his sister then as he did, he could not, under
that

that impression, wish to see her the wife of such a man, although it might securely fix her in that style of affluence and splendor, so fitted to her virtues and accomplishments. But, that no further imputation of dilatoriness might be thrown upon him, he wrote to her to say, that it was his intention to take an early opportunity of requesting his Lordship's permission to pay her a visit; and that he fully expected, when Lady Meeresfield and Lady Emily were acquainted with the object of his journey, they would both earnestly press him to bring her back, as they had repeatedly testified a strong desire of having her company at Beechwood. From what new occurrences these expectations were never realized, our readers are now to learn.

When the Earl had parted from his daughter with such anger, he retired to his apartment, to compose the emotions of his troubled soul, at the unexpected disappointment he had met with, and to meditate some contrivance by which he
might

might prevent the Duke from making any further declaration of his passion, and yet encourage him to think that his daughter entertained a secret regard for him. After forming several schemes for that purpose, he at last resolved to tell his Grace, that upon a fuller consideration of the subject, he was of opinion, that any precipitate disclosure of his wishes might offend the delicacy of Lady Emily, as young women were apt to think, if too hastily called upon to determine in affairs of this kind, that they are not allowed to follow their own inclinations; and that, therefore, he reckoned it as a very fortunate circumstance he was under the necessity of leaving Beechwood so soon, as during his absence he could, by gentle hints, prepare his daughter for the avowal of his passion, when arrangements might be made for finally completing an union, which he would venture to predict, both of them would justly number among the most happy incidents of their lives. This the Earl accordingly did; and the very next day the Duke took
his

his departure, in compliance with these suggestions, to the equal satisfaction of the father and the daughter, though arising from such very different motives.

By this manœuvre, the Earl had gained time, which was precious to him at this critical juncture; since he did not despair, in the interim of the Duke's absence, notwithstanding the uncommon firmness with which Lady Emily had resisted his overtures, of prevailing upon her by the time he returned, to receive him as her future husband. The next step he took, in order to bring this affair to a successful issue, was to seek Mrs. Eaglehurst, and to apprise her of the little progress he had made in inducing his daughter to accede to his views, under the full conviction of her ably seconding them; as he began to think it possible, that with all his sagacity, in penetrating into the designs of his own sex, he might not possess so great an insight into those of the other.

Most

Most opportunely for his intentions, Mrs. Eaglehurst came to him a few minutes after the Duke had driven away, to get some letters franked. As soon as he had done them, he threw down his pen with a petulance of manner, which shewed that something had happened to disquiet his mind, and with an agitated tone of voice exclaimed, " You, my dear friend, who enter so warmly into all my plans about Emily's future establishment in life, you, who wish my old age to have some rest and happiness, as my youth had no joy, will hear with equal surprise and affliction, that she has positively refused the hand of the Duke of Glassonbury. As I have set my heart upon this match, do you use your influence over her mind, to forward it. Do you with all that address, for which I may in vain seek your superior, and with all that zeal, with which your friendship for me will inspire you, lay before her the most likely arguments to induce her to change a resolution so unwise in itself, so prejudicial to her

her own interest, and to you, I will add, so destructive to my future ease and happiness."

Here was a golden opportunity to procure the removal of Charles, without furnishing the Earl with the most distant suspicion of the real cause that led Mrs. Eaglehurst to wish it, but which, if once lost, this crafty woman felt could never be recovered. After a slight pause, during which she found but little difficulty in concluding that there was nothing reprehensible in promoting our own interests at the expence of ruining those of another, she replied, " Could I borrow your Lordship's eloquence upon this occasion, my feeble efforts would be unavailing to convince your daughter of the impropriety of her conduct, whilst the cause of it is unremoved. The skilful physician, I believe, my Lord, is far from pronouncing his patient out of danger, although he shall have ascertained the exact nature of his disease, if it be not followed up by appropriate remedies."

" Why

“How—what do you mean?” said the Earl, with visible emotion.

“Why,” rejoined Mrs. Eaglehurst, “when a young man, who is not born to the expectation or inheritance of a large property, and has no family to boast of, carries himself in the most lofty manner towards his superiors in rank and fortune, contradicts their opinions, criticises their arguments, refuses to pay a just deference where it is so strictly due, and wraps himself up in fantastical notions of his own importance; this sort of excessive presumption is surely chargeable on something more than the giddy thoughtlessness and exuberant spirits of youth.”

“Still you speak in enigmas,” answered the Earl, impatiently.

“To the point then,” replied Mrs. Eaglehurst; “your witty neighbour, Lady Devereux, whose taste and judgment it would be a species of heresy in the eyes of the fashionable world to doubt, observed to me the
other

other day, that in point of countenance, figure, manners, and conversation, your Secretary was the most captivating young man she had ever known. Is there any thing very surprising if your daughter should happen to be of the same opinion?"

"I understand you now," said the Earl, starting up from his chair, and vehemently striking his hand upon the table, "It must be so the truth did before momentarily come across me, like a flash of lightning in a dark night; but, now you have made it as clear as the noon day's sun. Yes—yes; you have completely opened my eyes to the real cause of her refusal of Lord Pensington and the Duke of Glassonbury. The more indeed I review her late conduct, the more it conspires to remove my doubts, and to proclaim her matchless folly and his daring presumption. But does this minion of her favor think that I will tamely overlook this ingratitude to his benefactor? Can he think that, like some old sentimental gentleman in a German play, I am to be melted into a compliance

VOL. II, F

pliance with his insolent wishes, by the pathetic tears, and romantic ravings of a love-sick girl. If such be his hopes, his heart shall soon sink in despair within him, and give up all for lost. A thought indeed this instant strikes me, which I will directly put into execution, according to the injunction of the old adage, not to put off till to-morrow what may be done to day. This letter which lies before me, comes from Oglethorpe, who, in consequence of his very alarming state of health, wishes to vacate his seat in Parliament immediately, instead of keeping it to the end of the Sessions, as he had first proposed. Now, in an inconsiderate hour, I promised Beauford, at least, I said what was equivalent to a promise, that he should supply my old friend's place. To get rid therefore of this upstart, I will in less than an hour dispatch a letter to Oswald, the purport of which shall be to say, that I have a seat in Parliament very much at his service, by the resignation of Mr. Oglethorpe; and that he need not feel in the smallest degree
oppressed

oppressed by the kindness of this offer, as singular enough to relate, I had not one person at that moment in my eye to put in except himself." "But, my Lord," replied Mrs. Eaglehurst, "if Oswald should not chuse."——

"Oh, I am aware of his objections to become a Senator," answered his Lordship, hastily interrupting her, "but I shall trust to you to over-rule them. Now, if I know any thing at all of Beauford, this offer of mine to Oswald will produce the desired effect of my getting rid of him without the slightest trouble. For, as soon as he has seen it, which you may easily contrive to let him do, his pride will of course take fire at this unlooked-for treatment, and will swell to such a pitch, as to make him adopt the very course that I could wish him to pursue—that of dismissing himself."

"Yet, before you take a step so fatal to the prospects of Mr. Beauford," replied Mrs. Eaglehurst, with an imposing affectation of tender anxiety for Charles, when she found

that her object was accomplished, "let me conjure your Lordship."——

"Not a word," answered the Earl, again interrupting her, "will I hear in his behalf. I well know your compassionate nature and extreme friendliness. But if you attempt to extenuate the offence of this young man, I shall consider you as taking a greater interest in his welfare than in mine. And, after all, your attempt will be fruitless; for nothing can alter my firm and fixed resolution in this respect. Depart he shall, and that before to-morrow's sun appears. For idiot that I have been in this affair, you cannot suppose me foolish enough to allow of any tender adieux, any parting protestations of inviolable attachment; any more acting the parts of the hero and heroine of a romance in this house. By the time that you have taken a few turns in yonder shrubbery, I shall have written my letter; and, as I know that he is now alone in his apartment, you can easily frame some excuse for entering it, and as easily bring about the
conver-

conversation, which will secure to me the removal of him, who has been the bane of my fondest wishes." So saying, his Lordship immediately sat down to prepare the death-warrant of Charles's ambitious hopes.

Dim-sighted, however, as the Earl had proved himself in developing the rise and progress of his daughter's passion for Charles, yet he was quite right in the sort of presentiment that he had of the line of conduct his Secretary would pursue on reading his letter. For, no sooner had Mrs. Eaglehurst shewed him the contents of it, under pretence of communicating to him an event which his friendship for Oswald would afford him so much pleasure, than with that prompt and manly decision which so strongly marked all his proceedings, but with a dignity of feeling which, abstained from offering the slightest comment upon the barefaced duplicity and injustice of the writer, he addressed the following lines to the Earl, the very instant she had quitted his apartment.

" My

“ My Lord,

“ Had I not seen, under your own hand, the offer which you have made to Mr. Eaglehurst to return him for the borough of Castlebar, I should have said the fact was incredible after the conversation you had had with me upon that subject, and which was so recent, that even one who has a morbid memory could scarce plead forgetfulness of it. As complaint and remonstrance must be equally futile where the virtues of candor, sincerity, and consistency are so wantonly disregarded, it only remains for me to add, that from this moment I consider your Lordship as having no farther claim upon my services.

“ I am, my Lord,

“ Your Lordship's very obedient servant,

“ CHARLES BEAUFORD.”

Within ten minutes Charles's note was thus answered.

“ Earl

“ Earl Altamont has received Mr. Beauford's *angry* note, and he has only time or inclination to add, that it is impossible for him to leave Beechwood sooner than the Earl can wish or desire.”

Though Charles was quite unprepared to anticipate this conduct from his Lordship, yet he was far from being cast down or appalled at it; since a circumstance had the day before occurred, which, however trivial in itself, had absolved him in a great degree from that submissive respect and esteem which he had before paid to his Lordship's character, and which led him to think, that those who saw this *little great* man the nearest, and knew him the best, would admire him the least. A number of leading gentlemen of the county had formed themselves into a club, but which might be properly termed a political rather than a convivial meeting. Now, it so happened, that my Lord, who was the institutor of it, had, in the presence of Charles, told a gentleman, who

who had requested the aid of his Lordship's eloquence in support of a motion he intended to make there, that he must not rely upon him for any more than a silent vote, as he was not like those gentlemen who came with set speeches on these occasions, and thus palmed themselves on the county as great orators. With him, there was no preparation of the subject, no excogitation of matter; if his thoughts did now flow spontaneously, he was at no trouble to force them to come.

All this was seemingly well said; as it gave the appearance of extempore genius to his Lordship's speeches, while it manifested that abhorrence of *finesse* which Charles expected to find in a man of superior abilities. But, very unluckily for this assertion of his Lordship's, a few minutes before he had put into Charles's hands a number of papers to revise, when among them was a long speech written in a fair hand upon the identical subject which the gentleman had solicited his Lordship to speak, hardly a line
of

of which was not retouched; and while it exhibited an incontestable evidence of his laborious perseverance, afforded a no less curious specimen in some parts of his infelicity of diction and grammatical inaccuracy. With feelings of mingled contempt and astonishment, Charles replaced the paper, and with the settled conviction, that the man who was obliged to have recourse to such paltry but cunning tricks to obtain a public reputation, would, in the end, be found, however he might have reached the zenith of political importance, to have no more than second-rate talents, with the first-rate pretensions, while it shewed him to be destitute in his private character almost of every trace of high-minded principles, and truly honorable dispositions.

But although Charles no longer beheld the conduct and character of the Earl with that sincere admiration he had done before, it is not therefore to be concluded, that he was philosopher enough when left to his solitary reflexions

reflexions to view all his bright prospects suddenly nipt in the bud, without feeling one sentiment of regret ; while enslaved as his whole soul was to the perfections of Lady Emily, he must have been more or less than man could he have contemplated his separation from her with stoical fortitude. Agonized however as his feelings were at the thoughts of it, he resolved to retain such command over them as not to seek any private interview with her Ladyship before he went, but to leave the house immediately ; having at that time no pecuniary demand to make upon his Lordship, or any of his papers in possession, that required he should have the least further verbal or written communication with him. Accordingly, Charles rang for his servant, and ordered his horse ; and then sat down to address letters to those families in the neighbourhood who had treated him with a civility approaching to friendship, in which, after thanking them for their polite attentions, he begged that they would
consider

consider the suddenness of his departure from Beechwood, though without deigning to mention the cause, as an apology for not taking a formal leave of them. Upon his servant's return, he desired that they might be sent immediately, and afterwards, while he remained in the room, to make some arrangements for his master's journey, Charles addressed the following letter to Lady Meeresfield, which he desired him to deliver into her hands when he was gone.

“ Madam,

“ Before these hasty lines meet your eye, I shall be some miles from Beechwood. To the sister of Earl Altamont, it would ill become me to utter one disrespectful expression against her brother. But though I am restrained by motives of delicacy from unfolding to her the treatment which I have received from his Lordship, yet that my character may not be entirely misrepresented when I am gone, it is incumbent upon me to

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state,

state, that it was *by my own choice* I resigned my appointment. Nor shall I be accused of exaggeration, even by Earl Altamont, when I affirm, that during the whole period that I held it, there has not occurred a single instance in which I have neglected my duty, or abandoned the right feelings and principles of a gentleman.

“ To say that I leave your Ladyship with concern, would but poorly express the deep sense which I have of a kindness that has been to me almost maternal. No, indeed ; I may be thought headstrong and rash ; I may be imprudent enough to speak out when self-interest enjoining me to silence ; and I may scorn to be the slave of a great man when I cannot be his equal ; but, whilst I have a memory, a conscience, a heart, I shall never cease to think or speak of you, without respect, regard, gratitude, and admiration. There is only one being besides, at Beechwood, who has inspired me with similar sentiments. Who that is you may guess,
but

but I shall never name. That you may both reap the fruits of your distinguished virtues, in a long and uninterrupted career of happiness, will ever be the fervent prayer of him, whose greatest pride and pleasure it is to subscribe himself,

“ Madam,

“ Your Ladyship’s most obliged,

“ And most devoted servant,

“ CHARLES BEAUFORD.”

CHAP. XXI.



Go bid the Needle his dear North forsake,
To which with trembling reverence it does bend ;
Go bid the stones a journey upwards make ;
Go bid the ambitious flame no more ascend ;
Then shall I cease thee, thee alone to love.

COWLEY.



Soon the news of Charles's departure reached Lady Emily's ears. For, his servant in his way to the houskeeper's room, happening to meet her Ladyship's woman, asked of her the cause of his Master's going, imagining that she could inform him. At first, she thought that the man was intoxicated for
making

making such an enquiry ; but when she found he was in his sober senses, and that he persisted in saying his master had left the house, not to return again, no words could describe her astonishment. Eager, however, to place the truth of this important intelligence beyond a doubt, Mary went immediately back to her Ladyship, whom she had just left in her *boudoir*, and without any sort of preface or apology, exclaimed, so anxious was she to find herself in a mistake, “ Oh, my Lady, is it true, that Mr. Beauford has quitted Beechwood, with no intention of returning?”

“ Who gave you this information,” said her Ladyship, in a hurried tone of voice.

“ His servant, Madam,” replied Mary, “ who has orders to follow him with all his baggage to Birmingham. If he is gone, all I know is, that he has not left his equal behind him ; for old and young, rich and poor, alike adored him.” This high flown panygeric might have been repeated again and again, without her Ladyship’s noticing it ;

it ; for she seemed like one confounded and bereft of all sentiment by the shock of such an unexpected stroke. Since, though hope seldom or ever whispered to her, that the Earl would consent to her union with Charles, yet was her mind so familiarized to the idea of his being settled in the family, that the bare possibility of his removal had never once occurred to her. The very thought of it therefore once excited, was quite overwhelming, and thus produced something like a temporary stupefaction.

She had just begun to recall her scattered senses, when Lady Meeresfield entered, upon which Mary withdrew. “ My dear,” said her aunt, “ there is news here,” giving Charles’s letter to her, which will surprize, and in some degree afflict you, as Mr. Beauford was of late, if I am not mistaken, becoming one of your favourites.

With a trembling hand, she took the letter, though with an inward endeavour to command herself so entirely as not to betray the violent emotions with which she was agitated ;

tated ; but when she came to that part of it, where Charles made so delicate an allusion to herself, the full force of which she, and she alone, could understand, the mask then dropt off, the feelings of nature displayed themselves, and she suddenly fainted.

Unwilling to have any one a spectator of her distressing situation, Lady Meeresfield rang for no assistance, but throwing open the window, and placing her near it, trusted to the air to bring her about. As soon as she began to recover, her aunt took her hand, and addressing her in the most soothing and affectionate manner imaginable, said, " How do you feel yourself now, my dearest Emily ? " Without uttering a single word in answer to this question, but with a look which deeply affected Lady Meeresfield, she threw her arms around her neck, and burst into a flood of tears.

Having in this manner assuaged the anguish of her heart, she at length exclaimed, " Oh, my beloved Aunt, however well I may have succeeded, in concealing my at-

tachment to Beauford, from the rest of my friends, the attempt must be now quite impracticable with you; nor shall I be deemed less worthy of your sympathizing kindness, when I declare, that I was actuated by no other motive in not revealing my passion to you, than that of putting it out of the power of my father to insinuate in the event of his discovering it, that this affair was carried on with your privity and consent. To you, I shall not seek to exculpate myself from the charge of bestowing my affections upon one, whose only demerits consist in his want of high birth and fortune; since, from what I have heard of your early history, my offence will not be considered as inexpiable in your eyes. But do not imagine, that without a hard struggle, I yielded up my heart to Beauford, as if quite unconscious or indifferent to the unappeasable anger that I should by so doing, excite in my father; yet, now that he is in such complete possession of it, that it never can admit a rival or successor, I will avow to you my firm resolution

tion of suffering any extremity, rather than give the slightest encouragement to the Duke of Glassonbury, who, before he went, solicited my hand of my father. Do not you then, make me completely miserable by saying you disapprove of this resolution."

"Why, my Emily," answered Lady Meeresfield, "I cannot so far dissemble my real sentiments with you as to deny, that Mr. Beauford is deserving of your love, though in extorting this confession from me, you are not thence to conclude, that I can ever sanction the wish, could I suppose you ever had formed it, of uniting your destiny to Beauford's, without the approbation of my brother."

"Oh, banish all apprehensions of that sort from your mind, my dearest aunt," replied Lady Emily, "and believe me, had such an intention ever entered my thoughts, I should not be emboldened to make to you the request which I am now going to ——."

Here, perceiving that her voice faltered, she

blushed deeply, and became so confused as to be incapable of proceeding.

“Come, my love,” said her aunt, tenderly, and without seeming to notice her embarrassment, “what is this request that you are about to make? If it is not *very unreasonable*, and that I cannot imagine it to be from your good sense, you need not doubt my compliance.”

“Why,” rejoined Lady Emily, hesitating, and with her eyes thrown upon the ground, “having thus confessed to you my attachment for Beauford, you must needs think, that I am not a little anxious to learn how you will answer his letter, for you will answer it, I trust, my dearest aunt; since you cannot be insensible, more than myself, of the delicacy of his conduct under all the circumstances of his situation, in not seeking a private interview with me before his departure, for the purpose of drawing from me a promise of unalterable attachment, knowing so well, as he must, the dominion he has
over

over my heart, though he has generously forborne taking any advantage of it."

"In what manner," said Lady Meeresfield, "would you wish me to address him."

"Could you not observe," answered Lady Emily, after you had lamented the cause of his departure, and expressed the hope that a reconciliation between him and my father might yet be effected, that perhaps it might be a consolation for him to know, you were not the only person who viewed his absence with pain and regret?"

"Well," replied her aunt, "as you have so fully satisfied me that you will act no rash part in this affair, I will promise you to express this sentiment to Mr. Beauford: and, in the mean time, let me see you endeavour to recover your spirits; for remember, that the day which opens with the most lowering appearances, is oftentimes followed by an evening of unclouded splendour." Having said this, she affectionately kissed her, and left the room.

Much

Much as Lady Emily felt her mind relieved by this sympathizing tenderness of her aunt, yet when she turned her thoughts towards her father, despair took possession of her heart, as she imagined herself, as it were, rejected, and thrown out from his affections for ever. It was not however till dinner that she saw him, and never was a repast less enjoyed or partaken of by four persons, than this was by his Lordship, Mrs. Eaglehurst, Lady Emily, and her aunt. As soon as she could with propriety leave the table, Mrs. Eaglehurst retired, under the pretext of being troubled with a head-ache; for on his Lordship's brow, sat a portentous sternness, which she foresaw would, before they separated, produce a conversation critical to Lady Emily, and in no small degree embarrassing to herself; in case, the Earl, in the warmth of his remonstrances, should make that sort of appeal to her, which might constrain her to deliver an opinion so unfavorable to her Ladyship, as would lead to a suspicion

suspicion that she was accessory to her lover's removal.

Directly she had made this timely retreat, Lord Altamont took out his snuff-box, rapped it twice violently with his hand, a constant practice with him whenever he was particularly displeased, and, after darting an angry glance at his daughter, said, "I can now clearly understand why Lady Emily is so very wretched; why she has refused Lord Pensington, the Duke of Glassonbury, and would I suppose, the whole peerage to boot. But does she suppose that I would keep a serpent in my bosom to sting me a second time? And that I am so altered, so changed in a few short months, that I can tamely see in silence that flagrant breach of gratitude, which has nearly deprived me of a daughter, and aimed such a deadly blow at all my future happiness? Your favorite, Madam, is dismissed from this house, no more to return. I mean the all-accomplished Mr. Beauford. And you shall know my mind in one word upon this disgraceful
affair

affair. No tears, no intreaties, no, nor any fine sentiments about first love, and vows of truth and endless constancy, shall induce me to restore you to my affections until you consent to receive the Duke of Glassonbury for your husband."

"With respect, my Lord, to Mr. Beauford," replied Lady Emily, "you must permit me to observe that——"

"If you attempt to deny," replied her father, hastily interrupting her, "your regard for this young man, I shall think that nothing can equal your folly, but your duplicity."

"My Lord, I had no such intention in my thoughts," said his daughter. "For, if talents of the first order, united with personal attractions, and embellished with elegant manners, fascinating address, high-minded honor, and generous gallantry of feeling, be the qualities that are prized above all by the most refined and beautiful of my sex, I am sure I need not blush in avowing the object of my choice. Even you, my
Lord

Lord, have acknowledged more than once in my hearing, the virtues and accomplishments of Mr. Beauford. No wonder then, that they should inspire me with a more tender sentiment for the possessor of them, when scarce a day elapsed without my seeing or conversing with him."

"Hitherto, brother, I have forborne saying any thing upon this delicate affair," said Lady Meeresfield, "first, because you have ever told me it was your wish that Emily should think and act for herself; and, secondly, that as my advice has not been asked, my interference might be deemed officious. Yet, really I cannot carry my complaisance so far as to refrain from saying, that you yourself are chiefly to blame for being so imprudent as to introduce into your family a young man of Mr. Beauford's personal and mental attractions, when you knew that your daughter's affections were disengaged. But, I suppose your confidante and privy counsellor Mrs. Eaglehurst,

hurst, has before exclaimed in allusion to the glaring folly of that act! "How short-sighted and erroneous are the calculations of the wisest of mankind."

Nettled as his Lordship was at this speech, especially at the latter part of it, he thought it most politic not to appear so; and therefore pretending not to let the way in which Mrs. Eaglehurst's name was introduced, divert him from the main point of his discourse, he answered, "And you see what a return my daughter has made me for allowing her to judge and act for herself. But is it for a moment credible, that I should have pursued this indulgent course with her, had I not prodigiously over-rated her good sense and discretion? For I had foolishly enough conceived, that Lady Emily's notions of life would have kept her from loving one, however handsome or accomplished he might be, whom fortune had placed in so different a situation. In short; —I thought it impossible that she could have
ever

ever so disgraced herself as to place her affections upon my Secretary."

"Your Secretary, my Lord," replied the daughter, "is by birth a gentleman, and from an origin similar to his, do we not daily see characters rising to the highest dignities in the land. Some such sort of person as Mr. Beauford is, must in all probability have been the founder of our house. From one so gifted, we must have had our titles, honors and estates. Then surely, my Lord, I have not done such great disgrace to my family, or to myself, in bestowing my affections upon him, whose virtues and talents are personal and original, in preference to his, whose are merely derivative."

"It is well, perfectly well," said the Earl, his eyes flashing with rage. "And, I suppose, you will next tell me, that as nature has linked your hearts together, your sense of things must be the same in all. But let me have no more of these shallow sophisticated sentiments, I cannot call them
reasonings,

reasonings, lest I should come to look upon you with as much horror, as I now do scorn."

"My Lord," replied her Ladyship, rising from her seat, "have I your permission to withdraw."

"Not," answered he, "till you explicitly tell me, whether you will marry the Duke of Glassonbury."

"In one word then," replied she, "I must repeat, that I cannot pay an obedience to your Lordship's pleasure in that respect. While at the same time, I must add, that no solicitations on the part of Mr. Beauford, were he weak or vain enough to make them, shall ever induce me to give my hand without your consent, or even to correspond with him, while he labours under your displeasure. For, though my soul revolts and sickens at the bare idea of marrying one man, while my affections are unalterably placed on another, yet I am not, my Lord, so possessed with a spirit of fallen pride,

pride, or so destitute of filial duty, as totally to forget what is expected from the daughter of Earl Altamont. If Mr. Beauford's abilities cannot enable him to emerge from his present obscurity, and to arrive at that elevation in which you yourself may deem it no presumption for him to seek my hand; or, if your disposition, oh, my father! is so severe and unrelenting, that my happiness is not to be preferred to views of interest, policy, or ambition, I may in secret bewail my wretched destiny, and in the end sink under the weight of my affliction; but I will never take a step that shall render my name hateful to you till the day of our final separation."

Hearing his daughter speak in this determined manner, quite incapacitated his Lordship from urging the conversation any further at present. In the midst of his anger, indeed, at her positive refusal of the Duke, he could not but secretly admire the propriety of her sentiments, and the candour and dignity with which they were uttered.

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He therefore suddenly started from his chair, directly she had finished, as if he could not with patience bear that she should thus have spoken to him, and without looking at her, or making any reply, immediately left the room.

CHAP. XXII.

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*Misfortune*, like a creditor severe,  
But rises in demand for her delay;  
She makes a scourge of past prosperity,  
To sting thee more, and double thy distress.

YOUNG.

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Our readers will naturally expect that we should now return to Charles, who, when he came to Birmingham, waited there a day for the arrival of his servant. From that place he wrote to his sister, to say that, as he should so soon embrace her, he would not then enter into any explanation of
the

the cause of his quitting Beechwood. Of this event, however, she was more speedily apprized by the pen of Mrs. Eaglehurst, who, after lamenting the occasion of it, yet taking care to hint, at the same time, that it was too high a matter for her interference, concluded her letter with saying, that nothing could afford her so much pleasure as the idea of having her company whenever she was tired of the protection of her brother, although that was a hope, which, from her enthusiastic affection for him, she must despair of ever seeing realized.

But, in another letter which that Lady dispatched on the same day to Mrs. Dudley, she contented herself with coldly telling her relative, that as young Beauford had been foolish enough to quarrel with his patron, she might expect to see him shortly for the purpose of taking his sister off her hands, and that upon his coming she need not be very pressing respecting his stay, as it was her secret intention to drop all further intercourse with both. When Charles had there-
fore

fore arrived at the inn near to Mrs. Dudley's mansion, and had sent a note to acquaint his sister, that as soon as he had made himself decent after his journey; he should have the happiness of embracing her, and paying his respects to Mrs. Dudley. "Bless me," exclaimed she, happening to be present when the note was delivered to Miss Beauford, and learning from her its contents, "how very unlucky it is, that I cannot offer your brother a bed, for I expect the Parkinsons here to night, and to-morrow, perhaps, you will be obliged to——"

"Oh, I beg," replied Miss Beauford, perceiving how eagerly she wished to get rid of her, "that you will not in the least disturb yourself about this unlucky visit, as you are polite enough to term it. For my brother, Madam, is very expeditious in his movements; I should not then be at all surprised, that after having returned you his thanks for your attentions to me, he should propose my accompanying him this very day to Scarborough, where he designs, I believe, to

remain a short time. Under that supposition, I have even employed the whole of yesterday in making my arrangements for so quick a departure."

Finding that Charles's stay at her house would not be prolonged beyond a few hours, Mrs. Dudley, like many others, who by over-acting their part, make that clear which might have been before doubtful, now became so importunate with Miss Beauford to prevail upon her brother to take at least a family dinner with them, that she was punished for her insincerity, by the sister's engaging that he should spend the whole day with her.

When Charles beheld his sister, he was struck to the heart to find her grown so thin and pale; while, on the other hand, she could not help observing with a sort of admiration, the improvements which had taken place in his person and figure since their separation; and, before the evening was over, Mrs. Dudley, albeit unused to the praising mood, pronounced him to be the handsomest,
best-

best bred, and best informed young man she had ever seen. Early, however, the next morning, the brother and sister departed, notwithstanding Mrs. Dudley's now sincere intreaties for them to pass another day with her; since Charles was impatient to be gone, lest chance should throw Warpdale in his way, whom he so much wished to avoid on his sister's account.

At Scarborough, our travellers remained a week, in order to take a view of what was most remarkable in the neighbourhood, and thence they leisurely pursued their course on to Buxton and to Matlock. For change of scene and air, Charles deemed of essential service to his sister, in the present delicate state of her health. Attracted, however, by the various beauties of that last romantic spot, they stopped there for two months, and as they took their retired ramblings, the very genius of the place, for they were both in a remarkable degree susceptible of the enthusiastic, seemed to create in them that sort of pleasing
H 2 melancholy,

melancholy, which, from being so congenial to their feelings, they would not have exchanged for a more gay sensation.

It was indeed scarcely possible for a man, thus circumstanced as Charles, to abandon his heart with satisfaction to any very pleasurable emotions, when, in his solitary moments, the difficulties which he had to encounter, pressed upon his mind with a weight almost overwhelming. For though, at times, he was not without those sanguine hopes, which are found peculiarly to mark the conjunction of genius and inexperience; yet, when he recalled to remembrance the flattering prospects which were just on the point of being realized, and contrasted them with the adversity which now over-clouded him, and the necessity imposed upon him to depend solely on his own exertions to emerge from obscurity, he felt that he must arm himself with all his fortitude to silence those distressing emotions, which were so ready to shew themselves in his present situation. In short, which ever
way

way he looked, all was dark and doubtful; all conspired to keep his mind in a state of nearly perpetual ferment and constant apprehension.

As an ardent lover, he was filled with ten thousand fears and anxieties, for the unexplored and unknown future; while the most passionate tenderness took possession of his breast, whenever he cast his eye on the much valued note of Lady Meeresfield; inso-much, that he almost regretted he had so rigidly adhered to the laws of that tyrant Honor, which deprived him of the mournful happiness of a parting interview with his beloved mistress. As an affectionate nephew, he felt what a great effort was requisite not to appear, in the presence of his sister, inconsolable for the danger of his uncle; having received intelligence from a friend of Earl Altamont's, on the very morning that he left Beechwood, of the arrest of several English gentlemen at Bourdeaux, on the suspicion of their being spies; among which unfortunate number, Charles could not help having a sort
of

of presentiment, that his poor uncle would be found. But though he well knew, that upon the event of his death, both he and his sister would be reduced to a state little short of absolute beggary, yet he was too sincerely attached to his uncle to be capable of feeling one more particle of solicitude and grief for his uncertain fate upon that account. As a fond brother, the state of his sister filled him with many disquieting thoughts. He perceived that she had lost all relish for the amusements in which she had most delighted; and that, with all her affected cheerfulness, the natural gaiety of her temper had quite forsaken her: he saw too, that her health was beginning to decline, and he had little doubt in his own mind, but, from the half-checked sighs which often escaped her, that her regard for Warpdale was among the chief causes of it. Dreading, therefore, that this growing attachment should take too deep a hold of her, as he believed him, with all his wealth, to be undeserving of her affections, he determined, the winter season being

fast approaching, to remove to Bath ; in hopes that a little dissipation might be the means of enabling her to throw off the dejection of spirits into which she was gradually sinking.

Accordingly, they repaired to that gay city, and for her sake, Charles partook of all its various amusements. He had not however been long there, before his fortitude was doomed to meet another severe trial. It was usual for him, at breakfast, to read the most interesting articles in the newspaper to his sister, when one morning, having complained a little of the head-ache to her, she said, “ Come, Charles, you shall not then make it worse by perusing the newspaper. Let me have it, and see if I cannot find something important or amusing.” She therefore took it up, and after running her eye over several paragraphs, read with an audible voice the following : “ It is now no secret, that the Duke of Glassonbury is the happy man who is destined to lead to the altar the beautiful and accomplished

plished Lady Emily Clairville, only daughter of that distinguished statesman Earl Altamont, and one of the richest heiresses in the kingdom.

A bulrush might have knocked down Charles at that moment. Putting both his hands up to his face to conceal the pain which wrung his soul, under the pretence of his head-ache increasing, he threw himself back on the sofa, and in silent agony indulged, by turns, his grief and indignation at this most unexpected intelligence. His sister had viewed the workings of his countenance with acute observation, as she read the paragraph; and suspecting, for some time past, that Lady Emily had acquired a sway over his heart, she ventured to say, in the hopes of drawing some such confession from him, that the information was, in all probability, false. But, in this wish she was completely unsuccessful. For, though Charles talked with her on every other subject relative to himself and his affairs without reserve, and had circumstantially answered her long string
of

of interrogatories respecting his quarrel with the Earl, yet he had always hesitated speaking of his passion for Lady Emily, from the modest apprehension that his sister should believe his vanity inspired him with too much facility in believing it was returned.

If then, he was silent when he cherished the delightful thought of being beloved by Lady Emily, and which shed such a soothing balm on his pensive mind, now, that he imagined himself quite forsaken by her, his proud spirit could ill brook the idea of drawing aside the friendly veil which covered his folly and presumption. Nor can we very severely condemn his feelings or his conduct upon this occasion, as there are few who can bear to tell that they have been deprived of their love, and still fewer who do not shrink from so mortifying and painful a sensation as that of revealing an unreturned passion. He preserved, therefore, the same inviolable silence upon his attachment to Lady Emily, as his sister did on her's to Warpdale. Thus
it

it happened, that though no brother nor sister could be more fervently attached to each other than they were, yet that delicious sympathy and confidential ease and openness which so naturally might have been expected to subsist between them, was, by this sort of false delicacy, denied to their mutual happiness.

Disconsolate, however, and incensed as Charles was at this supposed desertion of his mistress, (for our readers, we take it for granted, are aware that he had hitherto conceived that the Duke's departure had been owing to Lady Emily's refusal of him, in consequence of which the Earl was led to suspect their mutual attachment, and thus to insult him in the manner he had done, in order to get rid of him directly;) yet, he had the good sense to perceive, that his was a situation that did not allow him to sit brooding over his grief or resentment, but that he must strive his utmost, for the sake of his sister, to recover his tranquillity and sedateness. While he sighed, therefore, as a lover, he acted as
a man,

a man. There was one gleam of comfort, however, which broke in upon him some weeks after he had been assailed by this stroke of affliction; his sister evidently began to regain her wonted health. This much-desired event, while it powerfully contributed to remove a great load of anxiety from his mind, gave him also speedy hopes of carrying into effect a resolution, in every way suitable to the virtues of his heart—that of embarking for Bourdeaux in quest of his uncle; and which a grateful mind like his, we may suppose, conceived after the arrest of the English there had been confirmed by Earl Altamont's friend, and no subsequent tidings by him or his sister of Mr. Colebrooke's health or situation.

Conformably with this amiable project, now that he had the indescribable satisfaction of seeing his sister no longer wear even the appearance of sickness, he had, with her entire acquiescence, requested a respectable clergyman in the neighbourhood of Bath, with whom
he

he had formed an intimate acquaintance, to admit her into his family as a boarder during his absence. While, however, he was preparing for this voyage of duty and affection, a circumstance occurred, which not only put an effectual stop to it, but called upon him for a new exertion of self-command.

It was necessary for Charles to take with him a large supply of money, not only to defray the expences of his journey, but to meet any pressing and immediate wants of his uncle. Now, as he was naturally of expensive habits, and had studied no rigid maxims of œconomy, since his quitting Beechwood, his resources were at so low an ebb, that, after having made a pecuniary provision for his sister, he found that he could not undertake the journey without drawing upon his uncle's banker for five hundred pounds. When all his arrangements, therefore, were nearly finished for his departure, he wrote up to the banker for the above-mentioned
sum ;

sum ; upon which the next day's post brought him the following laconic answer :—

“ SIR,

“ Your's of the 12th ult. is just come to hand. My late partner, who was suddenly carried off about two months since by an apoplectic fit, was *a very particular man*, and I do not find, upon a reference to his books or to our cashier, any document which authorises the firm to accept your bills upon Mr. Colebrooke's account.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your humble servant,

“ RICHARD LEDGER.”

There wanted but some such disaster as this, to give the finishing stroke to Charles's unhappiness. Terrible as the blow was, he did not, however abandon himself to the weakness of sorrow. In the midst of this calamity, he possessed vigour and elasticity to call in the aid of reason and resignation. Instead, therefore, of wasting his time in
idle

idle murmurings and repinings, he proceeded to take, at once, the necessary steps for not increasing his embarrassments. He had been settled at Bath for some time. Addicted to an elegant style of living, he had incurred several debts. At Birmingham he had bought a handsome travelling carriage, for the accommodation of his sister; and as horse exercise had been prescribed for her, he had purchased two fine animals for that purpose. As he was likewise a great lover of books, he had indulged that rational, but costly taste, to a very great degree since he had come to Bath. Preparatory, however, to the disposal of these valuable articles to liquidate his debts, he, shortly after the receipt of Mr. Ledger's letter, took an opportunity of putting it into his sister's hands, on perceiving her one morning more than usually cheerful; and after having given her time to recover her astonishment at its contents, he addressed her to the following effect.

“ When it is impossible, Louisa, to escape a misfortune, there is little merit in
in

in bearing it with patient resignation. I pay therefore but a poor compliment to your good sense in saying, that I trust you will sustain this calamity; for I will not, in order to cheat you into tranquillity of mind, affect to make lighter of it than it is, with a becoming fortitude. The complexion of my fortune was entirely changed on my leaving Earl Altamont; but this letter, you perceive, places prosperity and independence beyond my reach, I dare not at present think, for how many years. For, to imagine that this man of business would advance us a sixpence on the strength of being the presumptive heirs of our uncle, and indeed of your little property forming a part of the sum deposited in his hands, would be nearly as ridiculous as to expect that he would load us with benefits and favors. Five and thirty pounds is now all that remains to me of the income which I had derived from my appointment under Lord Altamont. My books, carriage, and horses, must be immediately parted with, to discharge the debts which I have contracted in this place.

With

With the scanty pittance that will then be left, we must repair to London, there seek out some humble lodging, suitable to the narrowness of our circumstances ; and, as I am not totally unqualified for literary pursuits, I must endeavour, until it shall please Providence to restore our dear uncle to our arms, to pick up a livelihood by becoming an author. Luckily, a few chapters are only wanting to complete my Dissertation on the Rise of the English House of Commons, the composing of which formed the amusement of my leisure hours at Beechwood ; and I have no doubt, when it is in a fit state to be given to the public, that Mr. Maskwell, who published the pamphlet which I wrote in vindication of Lord Altamont, will offer me a handsome price for it. Had my inestimable friend, Mr. Aimworth, been now alive, I should have found in him a most faithful friend and counsellor under this bitter trial. Feeling the loss of him at all times, at no time do I feel it so much as at the present. But come, let me not indulge in the gloomy
reveries

reveries of my fancy, but prepare to act with firmness the part which Providence seems to have allotted to me ; since how many thousands are at this moment in my situation, without hearing one sympathising sentiment to cheer and animate them under their difficulties and labours. Should I then, dearest, dearest sister, sometimes cast a look back upon our former halcyon days, and compare the life of opulence which we have lived from our infancy, with that to which we are now reduced, you will do me no more than bare justice to believe, that I am less impelled to do so upon my account, than your own."

" O my beloved Charles," replied his sister, forcing a smile through her tears, " I should ill deserve the happiness of having such excellent a brother, if I could be so wanting in discernment and gratitude, as not to perceive and acknowledge your unceasing kind intentions respecting me. Blest then with your love, and re-established in my health, rest assured that I shall meet all the difficul-

ties of our new situation with composed and even cheerful feelings. While you, too, are employed with your pen, I shall be equally busy with my pencil; and it will be very hard indeed, if we cannot contrive to obtain a decent subsistence between our united efforts, until things shall take a better turn."

Delighted with these sentiments of his sister, Charles affectionately embraced her, and then sat out directly in search of a person, whom he thought very likely to put him in a way of disposing of his carriage and horses to the best possible advantage.

CHAP. XX.



Neque cuiquam tam statim clarum ingenium est, ut possit emergere, nisi illi materia, occasio, fautor etiam commendatorque contingat.

PLIN. EPIST.



It was not till a fortnight after the interesting conversation related in the last chapter had passed between Charles and his sister, that they exchanged their elegant apartments in the Crescent at Bath, for a second floor in one of the streets in the west end of the metropolis. This procrastination in their removal to London, was occasioned by the disappointment which Charles had experienced in the advantageous sale of his car-

riage and horses. For it happened to him, as it does to many others, who wish to dispose of such articles with the least delay possible, that they must be content to part with them at one half of their intrinsic value.

All the great families were now moving to town; and as Charles occasionally walked down St. James's-street, he met several who had visited at Beechwood, but feeling the utter impossibility of associating with them on equal terms, he shunned their society; while, by so doing, he unknowingly escaped the mortification of discovering the bias and direction which, in the true spirit of sycophancy, they had taken against him the moment they found he was no longer the *élève* of the great Earl Altamont. It was not, however, very often that he fell in their way; for his diligence, quickened by the sharp goad of necessity kept him almost in close confinement to his lodgings. Many too were the hours which he borrowed from the night, for the comple-
tion

tion of his performance. At length, to his great joy, it was finished; and full of hopes in its meeting with a favorable reception from the public, and confident of obtaining a considerable sum for his manuscript, the very day after he had fairly transcribed it, he hastened with it to the shop of Mr. Maskwell. Unluckily for Charles's impatience, that person was not at home when he first called; and though more successful in his second visit in that respect, some circumstances had occurred previously to his obtaining this much-desired interview, by no means agreeable to his expectations or temper, but which would have only raised a smile upon the face of the man of the world.

When Charles had the first time called on Mr. Maskwell, and found that he was gone out, he communicated to the head shopman the purport of his coming, and desired him to inform his master, that he should be with him at twelve precisely the next day; little doubting, but that Maskwell would be

as

as eager to possess his manuscript, as he was to dispose of it. He was, therefore, somewhat surprised to hear, that Mr. Maskwell could not see him for the present, and to find that he was suffered to wait for him in the shop, instead of being ushered up stairs into a private room, as had been invariably the case in his former visits to that person when he happened to be engaged. Nor was the surprise of Charles at all abated by Maskwell's coming to him half an hour after he had been waiting in the shop, and saying, in the most familiar manner imaginable, and without the slightest apology for having detained him so long, "it will be near half an hour longer before I can speak to you upon your business; if it is not, therefore, convenient to wait that time, you had better give me a call some other morning."

When the half hour had elapsed, for though Charles's patience was almost exhausted, yet he consented to stop, the door of Maskwell's parlour was thrown open, and put issued from it a stately person clad in
black,

black, with the bookseller following him, expressing his gratitude for all favors, in a tone of voice not very unlike to some starveling, returning thanks for a morsel of bread. Charles was seated on one of the stools in the shop, whilst this great man was passing through. Curious to see the person who had been the cause of detaining him so long, and who was the object of such fulsome gratitude, he put down the book which he had in his hand as he came by him, when his eyes met those of Dr. Glebmore. A thousand painful recollections rushed on his mind at this unexpected rencontre. Advancing towards the Doctor, he was, however, bereft for a moment of all power of word or motion ; since instead of stopping to say even good morning to Charles, he pulled off his hat, made a stiff bow, and stalked out of the shop.

Charles had scarcely recovered from his amazement at this behavior of the Doctor, before Maskwell called him into his parlour, and with a proud air of civility said, " Well, Sir, what are your commands with me ? "

" Did

“ Did you not receive a message from me,” replied Charles, “ that I had a work ready for the press, and that a handsome proposal from you would tempt me to sell it?”

“ Something to that effect my shopman did say, I believe,” answered Maskwell, “ but really, Sir, I could not have thought you had been such a novice in our trade, as to have talked in this very silly manner; I beg your pardon for giving your offer this term, but is it possible you cannot know that the proposal you have just now made to me, could only, with propriety, come from an author of established fame? Now, to suppose that I could seriously listen to it from one, who is totally unknown in the literary world, and who, from belonging to none of the learned professions, must be without the benefit of their powerful support, is a piece of extravagance that, I verily believe, is not to be paralleled in the dealings of authors and booksellers.”

“ If I rightly remember, Mr. Maskwell,”
said

said Charles, " the first impression of my pamphlet was a thousand copies ; and a second edition was called for in the short space of a fortnight."

" I perfectly understand the drift of that remark," replied Maskwell, with a significant smile ; " but do you thence infer, that this Dissertation of your's, on the rise of the English House of Commons, a taking title. I grant you, if it were the performance of a great author, is to meet with the same success as your pamphlet?"

" Why, I had fondly hoped," said Charles, " that so interesting a subject as I have chosen for this second production of my pen, and which has cost me double the labour and time that the first did, would not be without some readers or admirers."

" Oh, oh, I am glad to perceive," replied Maskwell, in an insolent and pompous tone of voice, " that what I attributed to your presumption, originates only from your ignorance, because——"

" I beg

“ I beg you ten thousand pardons, Mr. Maskwell, for interrupting you,” said Charles, carelessly playing with his stick at the time, “ but may I take the liberty of asking, whether you often look into Johnson’s dictionary?”

“ How could you ask such a question,” petulantly replied Maskwell. “ I have no time, believe me, for that sort of employment.”

“ I thought you had not,” said Charles, with seeming coldness.

“ Why so?” rejoined the bookseller.

“ Because you would have better understood,” said Charles, “ the import of those words ignorance and presumption. I would recommend you, therefore, as a friend, just to glance your eye over their true meaning, before you use them again, lest unawares you should happen to apply them to one, who was even more unskilled than I am in the latitude of speech allowed in a bookseller to an author.”

“ And

“ And where would be the mighty harm if I did ?” said Maskwell in a quick tone.

“ *Only* that you would be knocked down, Mr. Maskwell, with one of your own folios,” replied Charles, looking at him earnestly in the face.

“ The devil I should,” said Maskwell, changing all sorts of colours like the cameleon.

“ Indubitably that would be the case,” rejoined Charles, in the same easy tone as if he had been talking on the most indifferent subject. “ But to return to the business which brought me here. What will you give me for my Dissertation ?”

“ Not a sixpence,” said Maskwell, determined to be revenged for what Charles had just now said, by doing his utmost to mortify and humble him, “ the most I can offer is, to undertake the risk of printing five hundred copies, which will little more than pay the charge of the impression ; and to get that number off, I must have recourse to an expedient which we of the better sort of the trade

trade never think of, but where there is an imminent danger of the work falling dead-born from the press,—that of printing two hundred and fifty copies with a new title-page, announcing it as a second edition.”

“ I think,” said Charles, “ you had the whole of the editions of my pamphlet for your sole benefit.”

“ I had,” replied Maskwell, “ and it is that which moves me to make you the liberal offer that I have done. For you must have a wild notion of your own merit, if you think that your Dissertation is to meet with the same rapid sale as your pamphlet. Whatever is personal, political, and gratifying to the passions of men, will always go down, however bunglingly treated. Any Grub-street writer might have supplied your office, without the work selling one jot the worse upon that account.”

“ Well, Sir”, said Charles, “ as I happen to entertain a little higher opinion of my own abilities than you appear to do, I don’t chuse to accept of your very liberal offer.”

“ What I suppose,” replied Maskwell, bursting into a horse laugh, “ you are like another young author who called on me a few days ago, with a poem and some essays in his hand, and because I would not take his trash, affected to pity my ignorance in not knowing that, by similar kind of writings, Prior became an ambassador, and Addison a minister of state. But we may no more expect such events again to happen, than a new race of Oxfords and Halifaxes to start up. You had better therefore close with my offer ; for you will not have such another fine opportunity of bringing your commodity to so good a market.”

“ I thank you for your advice,” said Charles, preparing to go, “ but it does not suit my humour to profit by it.”

Vexed to think that he had not provoked him to lose his temper, Maskwell, by way of a parting blow, said, “ Well, Sir, as you have lost your situation with the only Mæcenas of the age, Earl Altamont, and from
your

your eagerness to sell your work, you stand in great need, I take it for granted, of ready money, I think I can serve your turn in a much better way than that of printing your Dissertation, upon the terms I have before offered. Do you call here to-morrow about this time, and I will introduce you to a friend of mine, who is now in want of an author to touch off the political articles in his newly established Paper; and as his pay is certain and liberal, you will of course have no objection to praise or abuse whatever public measures, or whatever public men he may direct you to do. I think I may venture to recommend you as a person very fit for his purpose."

If Charles's manner before was only expressive of placid but profound contempt, it was now altogether changed at these last words. Starting up from his chair, and, with a fiery indignation in his eye, that terrified the very soul of Maskwell, he cried out, "Look at me, Sir, and tell me what you
see

see in this countenance, which makes you suppose the character of rascal is so legibly written upon it, that I could prostitute my pen, to impose falsehood, or to blazon the cause of guilt for any motives of self-interest. And do you dare call those by the respectable name of authors, whose pens, like swivel guns, are ready to be directed against every quarter, and who are as much the bane of morals as of letters. Can it be possible also for you to think, that because I have left Earl Altamont, I am to be borne down by the insolence of such a thing as thou art. If I did not therefore believe you to be the despicable instrument of that mitre hunter, that Dr. Glebmore, I would immediately lay my stick across your shoulders for thus daring to insult the poverty of a man of honor."

The moment Charles was out of the shop, Maskwell jumped up from his seat, and bawled out to his shop-men, now no longer afraid of being chastised for his impertinence,

nence, " If ever you suffer that young fellow to enter my doors again, I will discard you all the very next minute. Then turning round to his head man, in a lower tone, said, " Tomkins, make a memorandum for his damned Dissertation, to be cut up whenever it appears." And having thus vented his rage in the only way that he could, he strutted back again fierce and erect into his parlour. Thus ended all Charles's hopes of selling his work advantageously to Maskwell.

Such a disappointment, under other circumstances, would have made little or no impression on his mind, yet it now quite discouraged and dispirited him. As he pursued his melancholy walk home, and reflected what a scanty and precarious subsistence was to be derived from his pen, and what little incitements now existed to animate his literary ambition; how bitterly did he repent that he had not studied the law, or even entered the gainful walks of trade,
instead

instead of seeking a long and an uncertain passage to distinction by means of the press. In the anguish of his heart at his wretched destiny, he could not help exclaiming to himself, in the words of the poet,

— Tell me why, good Heav'n,
Thou mad'st me what I am, with all the spirit,
Aspiring thoughts, and elegant desires,
That fill the happiest man? Oh, rather why
Didst not form me, sordid as my fate,
Base minded, dull, and fit to carry burdens.

The behaviour too of Maskwell, though beneath his resentment, excited in him a painful sensation, inasmuch as he could not avoid thinking that his impertinence was owing to some instructions from Dr. Glebmore, and which would never have been given without the sanction of Earl Altamont. But in this conjecture Charles was only partly right: since by accident alone the Doctor heard of his new work; having looked in at Maskwell's shop, the very day on which Charles had told the shopman the purport

of his visit, on finding that his master was not at home. Maskwell naturally enough, when he saw the Doctor, mentioned Charles's performance to him, taking for granted that he had read it. Now, as Doctor Glebmore never liked Charles, he affected to undervalue his abilities; the bookseller, therefore, finding that one of his oracles thought him a young man whose talents were not above mediocrity, and learning moreover that he had been dismissed from his situation under Lord Altamont, conceived he should act in a manner the most agreeable to the wishes of his clerical and noble patrons, and to his own interest, by behaving to Charles as we have seen he did.

It is easy, however, to imagine that Maskwell's refusal of his Manuscript was a source of infinite regret to Charles; for he had calculated that it would have brought him fifty pounds at least; and this sum was already disposed of in his own mind. In this exigency he had no alternative but

to sell or pawn his watch, the latter of which, after some little debate within himself, he resolved to do, trusting that he should soon be able to redeem it ; for though at times he was excessively dispirited, yet he was presently buoyed up again, and felt generally more disposed to see the favorable than the unfavorable side of things, a turn of mind which a great writer says, it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year.

Before Charles returned home, he sought a pawnbroker's shop, and having soon found one, he raised fifteen guineas on his watch.

In looking at the ticket which he had received for his pledge, he thought he had seen the name of Wormer before ; and upon further recollection, he remembered to have once accompanied Mr. Aimworth to a bookseller of that name. An idea then struck him, which he determined to put immediately into execution, and that was to try his

fortune with this bookseller; and away he went to Mr. Wormer, whom he luckily found at home. Now, though Charles was far from entertaining the notion that all booksellers were of the same stamp as Maskwell, yet he could not, in defiance of such recent fact and experience permit himself to hope for a very favorable issue to this visit;—without therefore fixing upon any sum for the price of his work, he simply told Mr. Wormer that he would leave it with him for his inspection, and call in a few days to know if he would give him any thing for it. While he was speaking, the bookseller looked at him so earnestly, that Charles reddened. “I beg your pardon, Sir,” said Mr. Wormer, on perceiving that Charles was somewhat displeased at the scrutinizing view he took of him, for staring you so rudely in the face; but will you allow me to ask whether you were not acquainted with the late Mr. Aimworth of Christ Church.”

“I had the happiness,” replied Charles,
with

with a sigh which he could not suppress at the remembrance of a name so dear to him, "of possessing the regard of that truly valuable man."

"And your name, Sir, if I mistake not," rejoined the bookseller, "is Beauford."

"It is," answered Charles.

"Well, Sir," replied Mr. Wormer, "I will take your work at your own price, provided it be not very exorbitant; for by so doing, I am quite sure I should have pleased my departed benefactor. You may remember, Sir, having once called here with Mr. Aimworth; it was then that he mentioned your name to me after you had left the shop, as the most promising pupil he ever had under his care; and he likewise passed such a high encomium on your character, that I recollected your name as well as person almost the instant I saw you."

"Perhaps it is but fair to inform you, Mr. Wormer," said Charles, "that I have offered my Manuscript to Mr. Maskwell, and he has refused it."

"That

“ That, Sir,” replied Mr. Wormer, “ will not less dispose me to accept it. But may I take the liberty of asking, why you are so very anxious to sell your work, since fame is the sole object of most young authors, while upon the profits they seldom bestow a thought. From the character which Mr. Aimworth drew of you, I am pretty certain you are not of a mercenary disposition. I hope therefore you will not deem me impertinent when I say, that I am afraid you must be involved in some pecuniary difficulties, or else”——

“ To speak the plain truth, I am at present,” said Charles. “ And, if you can employ my pen not in the temporising politics of the day, but in matters of pure taste and criticism, so that I may not have cause to blush in recollecting by what means I supported myself under my embarrassments, you would not find ingratitude, should fortune once more smile upon me, to be among the number of my faults.”

“ Sir,”

“ Sir,” replied Mr. Wormer, “ the late Mr. Aimworth, when I was in very low circumstances, raised me from them by recommending me to several noblemen who had been his pupils, and if he could have foreseen that you would ever have been necessitated to make this application to me, I well know what he would have said, had I been backward to serve you. Rely upon me, therefore for employing your abilities in a way perfectly congenial to your feelings ; and, in the mean time, if you will do me the favor to accept of this trifling advance, taking a twenty pound bank note from his drawer, you will convince me that you are not ashamed to accept a kindness from a man in my humble walk of life.”

“ Ashamed,” reiterated Charles, with his characteristic warmth, “ because you have acted from the native impulses of your worthy heart towards me. Far be such a despicable feeling from me ; and may I be sunk as low as my enemies can wish me, if
ever

ever I forget this act of considerate attention."

"Well, Mr. Beauford," replied Mr. Wormer, "one word more upon this subject, and I have done. Whatever may be the nature of your embarrassments, respecting which I trust you will acquit me of any design of wishing to pry into, let me advise you not to depend upon extricating yourself from them by your literary efforts. For, a greater or more ruinous mistake you cannot fall into than by entertaining such hopes. 'Woe to him who depends wholly on his pen,' said a celebrated French character to the famous Marmontel; since nothing is more casual. The man who makes shoes, is sure of his wages, but he who writes a book is never sure of any thing."

"I thank you for your friendly counsel," said Charles, "although you are wrong in supposing I intended to make that perilous experiment. I have no desire of turning author for life, believe me. I only wish to
take

take up the profession of letters, until I can employ my talents, slender as they are, to a more profitable purpose." So saying, Charles shook the honest bookseller cordially by the hand, thanked him again for his kindness, and hurried away to his lodgings to communicate to his sister the result of his morning's success.

CHAP. XXI.



— *hæret lateri lethalis arundo.*

VIRGIL.



It is now fit that we should return to the Altamont family, from whom our attention in the opinion of some readers may have been too long diverted. We left the Earl in great wrath, as it may be remembered, against his lovely daughter, for having disappointed his dearest wishes, by refusing the hand of the Duke of Glassonbury. It was, however, some consolation, though a small one it needs must be admitted, to the
proud

proud spirit of his Lordship, to find his daughter in the same decided tone as she avowed her regard for Charles was of the tenderest sort, declare as firmly, that she never would accompany him to the altar without his approbation and consent. So far his mind was at ease. But the perplexity which he was thrown by the certain expectation of the Duke's arrival in the midst of this fresh assault of difficulty and distress baffles all our powers to describe.

When however his Grace did come, and the Earl had at last prepared a plausible scheme as he thought to protract the renewal of his proposal in the vain hopes of gradually weaning his daughter from her attachment to Charles, he was marvellously, and in no small degree agreeably, surprised to hear the Duke, of his own accord, say, that on a further reflexion upon the subject which they had talked over at their last meeting, he was now clearly of opinion, that he ought not to press his suit immediately, lest he should incur the risk of losing Lady Emily by disgusting

gusting her with too much importunity; and therefore he would endeavour, hard as the task was, to impose such a restraint on his inclinations, as to let no expression for some time escape him indicative of the particular regard which he entertained for her.

This sudden alteration in his Grace's sentiments, which the Earl so naturally attributed to his excessive apprehension of offending his daughter, was however produced from a very different cause. Upon the Duke's return to Beechwood, it so happened that all the family were taking an airing, except Mrs. Eaglehurst, who was in the hall, just when he alighted from his carriage. After enquiring how my Lord did, and repeating the same question respecting Lady Emily, her aunt, and Doctor Glebmore, the Duke thought it would appear too confirmed a dislike of Charles to omit his name on this occasion, and therefore carelessly asked after him, when Mrs. Eaglehurst in as careless a manner replied, though secretly delighted at a question which in an
instant

instant she perceived would enable her to reap a decided advantage from it, "Oh, he went the very day you left us."

"And is he returned?" asked the Duke, because he had at that moment nothing else to say.

"Returned!" replied Mrs. Eaglehurst; "why, your Grace surely misunderstood me. I meant to say that he has resigned his situation with Lord Altamont, in imitation of his betters."

"Was not that a very unexpected event," rejoined the Duke.

"I believe it was a very desirable one to his Lordship," answered Mrs. Eaglehurst.

"Indeed," said he, with real or affected surprise. "Is it being too inquisitive to ask why it was so very desirable?"

"Oh, certainly not," replied Mrs. Eaglehurst, in the most easy tone imaginable, "although the cause of his departure you will agree with me, has something to recommend it to the eagerness of curious ears.

Lady

Lady Emily has a soft susceptible heart, and my Lord, to his infinite regret, discovered that his Secretary had made a conquest of it. But see!—yonder comes his Lordship, and as you can have no concern in this distressing affair, more than that which you must in common feel with the rest of his friends, I shall trust to your Grace's prudence in seeming to remain profoundly ignorant of it."

Now this was a bold declaration for the cautious Mrs. Eaglehurst to have uttered; but which she never would have ventured on, had she not confidently believed that the Duke's pride would prove greater than his love. And as she conjectured, so it turned out. For so jealous was he of his rank, that the very idea of Lady Emily casting a favorable eye on Charles, while she knew that he was a suitor for her hand, was quite insupportable, and betrayed in his mind such a total want of taste, independent of its being so very unbecoming in her, as almost to have the effect of converting his love; perhaps

we

we here abuse that word, into dislike and contempt. He rejoiced therefore to think that he had escaped the double mortification of having his proposals rejected by Lady Emily, and for the sake of one who held the comparatively humble post of private Secretary to her Father; since nothing could have given him a pain equal to that of the world's suspecting he had ever been placed in so humiliating a situation. Instead then of roundly expostulating with his Lordship on the deception he was about to practise in giving him his daughter's hand, when he knew that her affections were placed on another person, he thought, upon weighing the matter coolly, it would be better policy to fight his Lordship with his own weapons of hypocrisy and dissimulation. Agreeably therefore to this determination, he conducted himself in the manner that we have seen he did.

A few days afterwards too, that the Duke had so completely concealed from the Earl the true meaning of the foregoing explanation,

tion, he pretended urgent affairs required his presence in Somersetshire. Having therefore told the Earl, that as soon as ever he heard of his arrival in town he should hasten to pay his respects to him, and lamenting deeply that he was so suddenly called away, he set off early the next morning from Beechwood court, with the secret intention of never visiting it again.

Shortly after his departure, the Earl repaired to his town-house, while Mrs. Eaglehurst went into Cheshire, notwithstanding his Lordship had pressed her so earnestly to pass the winter with his family. For this artful woman, now that she had put all things in a favorable train, as she thought, for the success of her son with Lady Emily, deemed it most prudent to keep for some time at a distance, lest she should no longer be able, with all her manœuvres, to combine so many opposite interests in a subserviency to her secret purposes. Indeed, never were her hopes of seeing Oswald become the husband of Lady Emily, raised to so high a pitch

pitch as they now were ; since, instead of finding him refractory to his Lordship's wish of entering parliament, as she had fully expected would prove the case, he met it with pleased compliance, and even seemed anxious that no time should be lost in his being returned. In addition to which surprising but agreeable alteration in his former sentiments on that head, she had also the satisfaction to perceive him, when he returned to Beechwood, which he immediately did on the receipt of his Lordship's letter, not only assiduous, but even gallant to Lady Emily, instead of being so sparing as before in his attentions to her. These two circumstances, therefore, were hailed by her as very fortunate omens.

Could Mrs. Eaglehurst, however, have seen into the real motive and drift of this behaviour, her joy at it would have been but of short duration. Oswald had always been fond of gaming ; but was very deficient in the skill and attention required in those who hazard deep stakes. When one unlucky

night, he lost so large a sum during his stay at Cheltenham, that he was obliged to borrow money at a most exorbitant interest to discharge what the fashionable world have agreed to style debts of honor. But even this expedient afforded not adequate means to liberate him from all the pecuniary difficulties in which he was then involved. All things, therefore, duly considered, he thought that the discreetest step he could take was to accept this proffered seat in parliament, till such time as he had cleared himself from his embarrassing circumstances. Wishing also to get a supply out of his mother's jointure, he knew no way so likely to carry that point, as to pay assiduous court to Lady Emily in her presence; and he acted his part so well in this respect, that he easily obtained the sum he wanted. Lady Emily too, by her conduct to Oswald, as undesignedly imposed on Mrs. Eaglehurst, as if she had been the most dexterous practitioner in the art of deception. For ever since the behavior of the former to Charles, in the
duelling

duelling affair, she had regarded him as Charles's friend, while she had an additional motive to continue with him on the same footing of familiar friendship after Charles was gone, in the hopes of gathering from him some intelligence of his movements. When these several circumstances are put together, it will justly appear, that they might have deluded even a wiser head than Mrs. Eaglehurst's, into a belief of the speedy accomplishment of her dearest wishes.

Upon the arrival of the Earl in town, the Duke, as he had promised, was among the first to pay his respects to the family, though from the vile abasement to which, in his mind, Lady Emily had stooped, by preferring Charles to himself, he fully expected to have heard of her elopement instead of seeing her. Finding, however, that she had not yet proceeded to that fatal imprudence, and thinking that if he made any further shew of persevering in his attentions to her Ladyship, he should at last be so hampered, that he could not break off the match; he there-

fore took an opportunity of telling the Earl, after he had been some weeks in London, that as he saw his attentions were so ill-received by Lady Emily, his pride would not suffer him to continue them any longer; and that deeply as he regretted the indifference of her Ladyship to him, he must beg leave to desist from his suit. At this unexpected declaration, the Earl did not dare to take the smallest offence, lest the Duke should entertain suspicions of the duplicity of his conduct, and reveal them to the world.

Thus was a decisive end put to all Lord Altamont's wishes of marrying his daughter to the Duke of Glassonbury; and the disappointment of them tended, if possible, to inflame his mind with still more violent resentment towards Charles, insomuch, that whenever Lady Emily was present, he could not forbear pouring out a torrent of invective and abuse against him. Yet notwithstanding the harsh usage which she met with from her father, her attachment to Charles was too firm

firm and fixed to be shaken by the battery of such proceedings. Her whole soul, indeed, was occupied with it. A love, therefore, so deeply seated, was no more to be rooted out by stern treatment, than by the refinements of subtlety. If her passion were too strong to yield to parental authority, it could not, in the smallest degree, be weakened by the pitiful expedients of Miss Upgrove and Miss Martman; who, because they both secretly wished to engage the affections of Charles, meanly tried to revenge their disappointment by circulating, wherever they went, a variety of stories to the disadvantage of Lady Emily, though they affected all the time to her the profoundest sympathy for her unhappy fate.

Some of these stories were of course, by the officiousness of fashionable friendship, conveyed again to the ears of Lady Emily; but so far from vexing or disconcerting her, she only laughed at the little malice and envy of her rivals, and took no further notice of their proceedings, than that of expressing surprise

prise to her aunt, how the ladies above mentioned should have become acquainted with her regard for Charles. Lady Meersfield's suspicions immediately fastened on Mrs. Eaglehurst; but as she did not chuse to assert what she had not the means of proving, she kept them to herself. The reader, however, needs scarcely be informed, that Miss Upgrove and Miss Martman had picked up this important intelligence from the communicative Mrs. Eaglehurst; for, ever fertile in inventions, that person thought, by making Lady Emily's passion for Charles the theme of fashionable converse, she would want the strength of mind to bear up against the ill-natured raillery and misrepresented anecdotes that she must hear from so many quarters. But this idea would have been soon abandoned as a clumsy one, could Mrs. Eaglehurst have exactly known the materials she had to work upon; since, with all Lady Emily's mildness of character, she had great firmness and inflexibility, whenever the occasion required it. It was a few days after

after that Miss Upgrove and Miss Martman had been so busy with their tongues, that Mr. Featherweight happened to pay a morning visit to Altamont House. "I thought my Lord had been here," said Mr. Featherweight, on taking a chair.

"He has just gone down to the house," replied Lady Meeresfield. "Did you not meet the carriage at the corner of the street?"

"No," replied Featherweight, "but I met his late secretary at that very spot."

"I hope he is well," said Lady Meeresfield.

"Faith, Madam," rejoined Mr. Featherweight, "I did not stop to ask him. He looked, however, very well; and there was a beautiful girl hanging on his arm, which, I suppose, was his *chere amie*," casting here a malicious glance at Lady Emily; "for I am told that this fine spark, whose head was quite turned with excessive self-estimation and presumption when he was with Lord Altamont,

tamont, is now become one of the most dissipated characters on the town."

"I know," said Lady Meeresfield, smiling contemptuously at Mr. Featherweight, "that you are too much of a fine gentleman to have any liking for antiquated proverbs; but there is one which so forcibly presents itself to my mind at this instant, and is so very applicable, that I cannot help giving it you. It is, Mr. Featherweight, to speak well of the absent, or not to speak of them at all."

"Why, even I could have told you, my dear aunt," said Lady Emily, "with my slender experience, that detraction as naturally accompanies great merit, as the shadow does the substance."

"If you mean to say, Lady Emily," replied Mr. Featherweight, colouring from inward vexation at this pointed rebuke, "that I am envious of such a person as Mr. Beauford, you ——"

"I mean to say distinctly, Mr. Featherweight,

weight, rejoined her Ladyship, "that envy is one of the qualities of a mean spirit, as much as justice is a virtue of a noble kind; and that, if you had fallen into the profligate and disorderly habits that you say Mr. Beauford has done, I am quite sure that that gentleman would have too well understood the laws of decorum and the ideas of female delicacy, to have talked of them to my aunt, myself, or to any other lady." Having said this, she arose from her seat, and, with a formal bend of her head to Mr. Featherweight, left the room."

The confusion into which Mr. Featherweight was thrown by this sally of indignation from Lady Emily, was so far from exciting the pity of Lady Meeresfield, that when, in obsequious language, he expressed his apprehension of having offended both her and Lady Emily by his observations on Mr. Beauford, she heard him with the most mortifying indifference, and even without pretending to believe all that he had said on the subject. This stinging treatment so completely

pletely discomposed Mr. Featherweight, that he was obliged very abruptly to take his leave.

With all Lady Emily's affected disbelief of this insinuating falsehood of Mr. Featherweight, it must not, however, be imagined that her mind was quite at ease after she had heard it; since true love cannot exist without fear: it required, therefore, no ordinary share of magnanimity of mind to avoid a suspicion that Featherweight's report was not correctly right. But from what transpired soon afterwards relative to this affair, Lady Emily felt, that to place any thing like an implicit trust in the steadiness of Charles's love, the most liberal rules of construction were necessary to be adopted, or else he would appear the very abandoned character that his rival wished to represent him. As Lady Emily's woman was helping to undress her at night, "Oh, Madam," said she, in the midst of it, "who do you suppose I met yesterday in the Park; no other person than Mr. Beauford, I assure
your

your Ladyship. It was a most agreeable surprise, and yet now I wish I had not met him."

"I hope he is well," said Lady Emily, her heart beating tumultuously at the very mention of his name.

"He looked as handsome as ever, Madam," replied Mary, "but not near so blooming as when at Beechwood."

"But wherefore did you regret that you had met him?" said Lady Emily, as her maid had touched on a string, which aroused all her attention.

"Because, my Lady,—because," answered Mary, stammering and appearing very much confused, "I am now obliged to believe, against my will, the shocking report which Mr. Featherweight's servant has spread about Mr. Beauford."

"Gracious heaven, can it be possible," exclaimed Lady Emily, entirely thrown off her guard at this moment, "that a mind which seemed formed for the noblest flights can be so debased within a few short months,

as

as to wallow at once in all the nauseous scenes of profligacy and vice. And have I—” here, however, she checked herself, and fell into a musing mood for some time.

Now Mary, who, from several circumstances, unnecessary, however, to relate, had long suspected that her Ladyship felt a secret regard for Charles, was so enraged at his ingratitude and perfidy that she could not be satisfied without giving her Ladyship the particulars of that meeting. While her mistress then was leaning her head on the chair in a pensive posture, Mary went on in the following manner: “ Yes, Madam, I say Madam, raising her voice a key louder, that Lady Emily might not lose a word she uttered, “ Mr. Beauford is the last young I should have thought would turn libertine. But you shall hear all, my Lady. As I was crossing the Park yesterday, at a time when there was scarcely any person in it, I saw at a distance a gentleman very like, as I thought, Mr. Beauford; though, from the circum-

stance

stance of a young woman holding his arm, I could not suppose it was him. As he approached nearer, I clearly perceived that I was not mistaken. Just, however, before he came up to me, for I saw by his manner that Mr. Beauford recognised me, he stopped short, and, as I thought, wished the lady he was with to leave go his arm for a minute. But as she did not seem inclined to do so, they both came up together. 'I am glad to see you Mary,' said Mr. Beauford, and I must own, my Lady, he said it in a way as if he was really pleased to meet me. 'And how is my much-respected friends Lady Meeresfield, and Lady Emily.' But I never thought he would have been able to pronounce your Ladyship's name, it seemed so to stick in his throat, whilst all the time he looked so terribly confused, that for the life of me I could not help pitying him. My pity, however, did not last long. For whenever I remembered what sort of hussey he had dangling on his arm, I grew so angry at the idea of his having the effrontery to ask after
your

your Ladyship and your aunt before her, that I abruptly left him."

"And was she so very handsome," said Lady Emily, while a deep sigh escaped from her bosom.

"Why the creature appeared handsome enough," replied Mary, "from the glimpse that I caught of her, for she had the modesty to hold down her head, while Mr. Beauford was talking to me; but never, in her best looking moments, I am sure, could she be reckoned half so beautiful as your Ladyship."

"And have I," said Lady Emily to herself on her woman's retiring, "placed my affections on one, who is the slave of every handsome face that he meets, but whom, in the foolishness of my heart, I thought the most honourable of men. Is this the return which is made me, for having subjected myself to the reproaches of an angry father, and to all the mortifications and embarrassments which are the usual companions of an unequal love? Could I have supposed that, after having
secluded

secluded myself in a great degree from all sort of society, and renounced all my hereditary pride of birth for his sake, I should be forsaken for licentious transitory joys. But surely I am in some frightful dream. For can I seriously believe, that one, whose disposition touched with mine in so many points of sympathy, and upon whose actions hitherto was seen no speck to sully their whiteness, is now transformed into a villian. To credit such things, is headlong to rush into the unnatural belief, that virtue and honor, and pure disinterested love, are nothing; and all that is touching or exalted in the human character is nothing. Oh no, it cannot be;—at least my heart would fain whisper to me so, since, in spite of the disgrace and dishonour which is now thrown on him, I feel that I still love him.”

These distracting thoughts kept her awake the greater part of the night, till at length, exhausted by the anguish of her feelings, she dropt into a slumber. It was late when she awoke, and upon ringing her bell, she found,

to

to her surprise, that Mary was gone out. With a fretfulness and petulance of manner, that quite disconcerted poor Mary, Lady Emily asked, as soon as ever she came into the room, why she had chosen so unseasonable an hour to be absent. "I beg your pardon, my Lady," said Mary, "for not being in the way when you wanted me, but on knowing the cause, I am sure your Ladyship will not be offended with me."

"Let me hear it," replied her Ladyship, in her usual kind tone of voice.

"Why as I was going early this morning, to deliver an order of your Ladyship's to the dress-maker," said Mary, "the very first person that I met, on leaving the shop, was Mr. Beauford. Now as he had not his female companion with him, I did not shun him." "I rejoice to see you Mary," said he, on coming up to me, as it gives me an opportunity of enquiring wherefore you so abruptly quitted me and my sister yesterday morning. Good heaven, your sister, Sir! exclaimed I, almost speechless with astonishment." "Yes,

my

my sister," answered he, "and if you had looked at her face, I think you must have instantly discovered our near relationship, without my telling you who she was."

"Why, what a wicked man has that Mr. Featherweight been, directly said I, for would you believe, Sir, he asserted, that you had entered into all kinds of dissipation since you left us, and was living with a woman of bad character. You will pardon me therefore, Sir, when I say that I took your sister for that very person." "I

am not surprised, answered Mr. Beauford, at any vile malicious falsehood, fabricated at my expence by Mr. Featherweight; but that your Lady or her aunt should have credited it, as I perceive by your manner they did, does indeed excite my astonishment. No Mary, tell your Ladies that distress like mine needs—but no matter;" and here, Madam, Mr. Beauford stopped short, and prepared to leave me. Fearing that I should be the innocent cause of again involving his precious life in danger, I immediately said,

I hope, Sir, if you should happen to meet Mr. Featherweight, you will not think of noticing any thing that I have told you about him. "Oh no, have no fears of that kind," Mary, said he, for I feel towards the infamous calumniator no other sensation, believe me, than that of profound contempt. But I will own to you that I am hurt, deeply hurt to think, that Lady Meeresfield could harbour a suspicion of my having strayed so widely from the paths of virtue; for as to Lady Emily, my character or habits, whatever they may be, can in no ways concern her." And why not, Sir? asked I. "Do you suppose that I have not heard of her approaching marriage with the Duke of Glassonbury," was the reply. If you have, Sir, said I, it is more than my Lady or I have. There was indeed a silly report in the newspapers of her going to be married to the Duke, but I thought no one believed in those sort of paragraphs. If you could have seen, my Lady, the look of joy which he gave me at that moment, you never would have forgotten

forgotten it. A heavy shower of rain at that instant came on, which put an end to our conversation, for Mr. Beauford insisted that I should take shelter in the shop where he saw me come from, so that he had only time to say, that he frequently walked with his sister in that part of the Park where I saw him ; he trusted, therefore, that if I met them there again, I should be happy to atone, as I ought, for the mistake I had committed."

The reader can easily imagine, with what heartfelt delight Lady Emily listened to the narrative of her woman, after the night of misery and wretchedness which she had spent. To find Charles still, beyond all doubt and scruple, the same virtuous and heroic character as had first attracted her regard ; to see him persevere, in the same unaltered constancy, alike in ill as in good fortune, was a happiness that she would not have forgone, no—not for all that wealth or greatness could bestow. Shortly, how-

ever, after she had given herself up to those transports of joy, her mind took a dismal colouring, on reflecting, from the few words which escaped Charles respecting his distress, to what scanty resources he might now be reduced. His sister too, who, in her imagination, was already the most amiable and affectionate of beings, sinking under the weight of her sorrows, and deprived of all those comforts which custom had rendered necessary to her existence. As she proceeded in painting to herself their various sufferings, her sensibility increased to that degree, that she could not refrain from weeping, and was in that state discovered by her aunt. But to her she made no endeavour to conceal the cause of her tears; and while she related, with just indignation, the base attempt of Mr. Featherweight to traduce the fair name of Charles, she ardently expressed a wish that some plan could be devised of affording him that relief which
she

she had every reason to believe he so much wanted.

To this wish, Lady Meeresfield gave neither a cold nor a feeble assent. For though, upon no account whatever, would she have been accessory to any private interview between her niece and Charles, and though she would have thought it her duty to have even gone the length of informing her brother of such a design, had it been meditated with her knowledge, yet, now she stood in need of no casuistic rules to direct her conduct. Charles was in distress. In extricating him from it, she felt that her brother could not justly accuse her of giving any countenance to her niece's attachment by that act, as he well knew, that her esteem for Charles was exclusively formed on his own merits, and would have still continued unchanged, if his love for Lady Emily had been unrequited. The only difficulty, which remained to Lady Meeresfield, in the present case, was, how to hit

on a plan to impart a liberal aid to Charles, without running the risk of wounding his pride or delicacy.

CHAP. XXII.



————— a hurt,
By Cupid made, who took his stand,
Upon a Widow's jointure land.

BUTLER.



CHARLES being now obliged to subsist by the labours of his pen, felt, for the first time in his life, how irksome the task was to write, unless prompted by the secret anticipation of future eminence. The dread, however, of falling into extreme poverty, kept him as close to his studies, as if he had been animated to prosecute them by the love of fame. Indeed, any thing short of that
powerful

powerful motive of action would have tempted him to renounce the trade of authorship altogether. For though his Dissertation did not fall dead-born from the press, as Maskwell had more than insinuated would be its fate, yet it was so ill received by the public, that with all Mr. Wormer's exertions, he could not force a second edition. Charles had yet to discover, that there were many circumstances which concurred to give popularity to a work, totally independent of its real intrinsic merit;—such as the cabal of a literary party, the support of a religious or political faction, the happy choice of the subject, or a compliance with the fashionable taste of the age, however extravagant, whimsical, or corrupt.

One thing, however, amply served to atone to Charles for the ill success of his work; the meeting with Mary, and the hearing from her, in the conversation which we have before related, that there was no treaty of marriage on foot between her mistress and the Duke of Glassonbury. In the fullness of joy at
this

this information, Charles had dropt a hint, as we may remember, of wishing to meet Mary again in the Park, under the plea of introducing her to his sister, but really in the hopes of drawing Lady Emily into a correspondence with him, through her means. But, when he reflected on the sad reverse of fortune into which he was thrown, as well as by the loss of his situation, as by the uncertain fate of his uncle, and of the great improbability there now was of his ever entering into that public sphere by which he might have a chance of rising to distinction, he felt himself bound, both in honor and discretion, to relinquish this design. Severe, therefore, as the struggle was, he determined to see Mary no more, rather than have recourse to any underhand and clandestine ways, to secure the continuance of Lady Emily's attachment to him. This generous resolution our readers surely will not think Charles was induced to embrace, from the singular prospect which opened at this time

time of rescuing his sister and himself from all the miseries and inconveniencies of poverty.

The first floor of the house in which Charles lodged, was occupied by a middle aged widow, of the name of Froth. Her husband had been a respectable haberdasher in the city, and a few years before his death had obtained so large a prize in the lottery, that by the persuasions of his wife, he left off business. Mrs. Froth, in her youth, had been often toasted as a beauty, and was now, though between forty and fifty, very genteel in her person, and exceedingly smart in her dress. A few days after Charles had been settled in his lodgings, the widow returned to her's from Brighton, where she had been passing the summer season. Inhabiting the same house together, they frequently met each other, and the oftener she saw Charles, the more positive she became, that he was by far the handsomest young man her eyes had ever beheld.

Had

Had Charles now lived by himself, it was more than probable that she would have soon contrived some way of introducing herself to him. But the circumstance of a young woman living with him, under the name of his sister, very much staggered her faith in the rectitude of his conduct, as she could not help suspecting, that the term of sister, in the present case, was only a cloke for that of mistress; eager, therefore, as she was to know Charles, she was deterred from making any advances towards his acquaintance, until she had satisfied her mind whether the young woman who lived with him was really his sister. A conversation, however, which Mrs. Froth's maid overheard between Charles and his sister, and which she repeated to her mistress, having put this question beyond a doubt, determined the lady to seek their acquaintance without any further delay. An opportunity was soon afforded her of carrying that design into execution. Hearing from her maid, likewise, that Miss Beauford was in the habit of
selling

selling her drawings, Mrs. Froth sent a message by her to say, that she wished much to see some of them, in order to purchase a few to give to a friend.

This message was the commencement of an intimate acquaintance between Miss Beauford and Mrs. Froth. For Charles, pleased to think that he had now an opportunity of introducing his sister to some female society; without any inconvenience or expence, was always very pressing for her to accept of Mrs. Froth's frequent invitations to pass an evening with her, since he could not be insensible that, while Lady Emily and his books were incessantly in his mind, he must be a very indifferent companion. The widow, however, generally contrived, by some means or other, to bring down Charles to tea with them, or, at least, to supper. Nor was it long before she had an opportunity of doing him a piece of service, that it never could be repaid, according to his grateful feelings, by the most unceasing attentions to her.

Whenever

Whenever Charles had occasion to go into the city, which was very often, as Mr. Wormer lived there, he seldom failed to call at his uncle's banker in Lombard-street. One morning the clerk, of whom he usually made his inquiries if any accounts were received of Mr. Colebrooke, told him, that a French house at Bourdeaux had lately transmitted them word, that there was a prevalent report of the English, who had been taken up in that city as spies, being sentenced to the guillotine. The excessive agitation into which Charles was thrown by this alarming news, so completely overcame him, that when he returned home, in spite of all his efforts to rally his spirits, and to dress his features in his usual smiles, his sister soon perceived, from his pale looks, occasional deep sighs, and long fits of absence which seized him, that something had happened since he had gone out, which greatly disturbed him. After much entreaty, mingled too with gentle upbraidings at his reluctance to unbosom his afflictions to her, she at last drew from him
the

the cause of his extreme uneasiness. Patiently, and even cheerfully, as Miss Beauford could struggle against adverse circumstances, she could not bear up against this stroke of misfortune. A violent fever was the consequence of it, and for some weeks her life was despaired of. It was at this trying moment to Charles, that Mrs. Froth rendered him those services which he deemed so worthy of lasting gratitude.

The enamoured widow perceiving how Charles's whole soul was devoted to his sister, considered this illness of her's as the most favorable opportunity which she could have of stealing imperceptibly on the brother's heart, by affecting to take the liveliest interest in her recovery. Accordingly, the moment she was pronounced to be out of danger, Mrs. Froth was constantly at her bed-side, fulfilling all the offices, to appearance, of a truly affectionate and sympathizing friend. Knowing also, how slender were Charles's funds, she thought no time could be so advantageous to her views to fix upon him

him

him an obligation as the present. She therefore pressed upon him the loan of fifty pounds, and insisted on becoming his banker, for what further sum he might need. In a transport of gratitude, Charles kissed her hand for this act of kindness which came so seasonable to him. For, the fees of the several physicians whom he had called in, amounted to such a sum as to drain him of his last guinea. And, as they had all separately told him, that his sister's mind must be amused, or else a relapse might be apprehended, he saw himself entirely without the means, until this offer was made, not only of making any short excursions, or of taking her to any public amusements, but even of procuring her those delicacies which the indifferent state of her appetite absolutely required.

When his sister had gained bodily strength sufficient to go out, Charles was for ever inciting her to take an airing, or to frequent
places

places of public resort in the hopes of banishing those melancholy reflexions on the probable destiny of her uncle, which would so frequently intrude themselves, in spite of all his endeavours to keep her thoughts otherwise engaged. Every proposal of this kind was cordially seconded by Mrs. Froth, who let slip no opportunity of being with Charles as often as she decently could. Besides, by drawing him into fresh expences, the widow hoped at last to render him so entirely dependent on her, that nothing could interfere to mar the success of her designs.

If Charles had not regarded Mrs. Froth, in the revered light of his benefactor, her company, which she always voluntarily offered on the occasions just alluded to, would have been quite intolerable to him. For, there was a levity in her manners and behaviour which he judged to be very unsuitable to her years, and which, in any other woman of the same age, would
have

have excited his severest reprobation. Oftentimes in walking, she leaned on his arm in a way that a stranger would have supposed, that she could not proceed five steps farther without falling, when she would exclaim with the most girlish affectation, "I vow and protest, you barbarous creature, I shall die of fatigue if I cannot rest myself;" although they had not gone a mile, and just before, perhaps she had been saying, that she could dance down twenty couple with perfect ease. Then too she would engross Charles's conversation so much to herself, that he could scarcely address a word to his sister. But, what most provoked him was, the ridiculous turn which she gave to her eyes, whenever she talked on a subject that had the slightest allusion to the passion of love, or *the tender sentiment*, as she invariably termed it. To such a pitch did she carry her ridiculous grimaces, that Charles was frequently on the point of saying something severe to put an end to them. But then he always stopped short, and at times taxed himself with a sort

of ingratitude at even entertaining the idea of wounding the feelings of one, who had evinced such a generous sensibility to his.

It must indeed be confessed, that Mrs. Froth made sufficient trial of Charles's patience : abroad or at home, she was perpetually acting in a way the most uncongenial to his taste and habits. She had in her youth made some proficiency on the harpsicord, and was accounted a tolerably good singer. But unfortunately, not recollecting that the voice is apt to lose some of its melodious tones, in a woman verging on fifty, she always would sing to the several airs that she played, to amuse Miss Beauford. Whenever Charles was present, her favorite air was, "*The Prince unable to conceal his pain,*" &c. ; and while she accompanied those words with her voice, her looks were so superlatively ludicrous, that it was impossible to smother a laugh without the aid of a handkerchief.

One evening, when Mrs. Froth had been screaming, like some wild sea-bird, to Charles and

and his sister, and had sent the latter out of the room quite distracted with the headache, and filled the former with the most painful regret at seeing a woman for whom he wished to entertain such a high respect, doing her utmost to excite his disgust, she suddenly drew her chair close to his, and perceiving him unusually dejected and silent, which she attributed to the low state of his finances, with a tender sigh thus addressed him.

“After many struggles and long debates within myself, I have at last determined, my dear Beauford,” and here she threw upon him one of her bewitching ogles, “to let you see the overflowings of my fond heart, and to place you far beyond the cruel gripe of poverty. But, I must gradually unfold the happiness which is in store for you, lest the sudden telling of it should quite overwhelm you. The late Mr. Froth who remained all his life that dull formal thing, a plodding tradesman, and could never be brought to understand what *the tender sentiment* was,

left to my own disposal, twelve thousand pounds. By the advice of the friends whom I have consulted on this delicate affair, I shall reserve four thousand for myself, as a settlement, while the remaining eight will be your own, when the day arrives that is to make you the happiest of mortals."

"Do I rightly understand you, Madam?" said Charles, jumping up from his seat, electrified with astonishment.

"You do indeed," replied Mrs. Froth, mistaking his astonishment for rapturous confusion, "thou dear beautiful cause of my departure from worldly prudence, but sufficient excuse for so doing."

"What, Madam," cried Charles, blushing deeply at her preposterous folly, "can I believe"——

"Yes," exclaimed the amorous widow, fixing her eyes ardently on him, while his were modestly thrown on the ground, in trembling apprehension, as she thought, of his uncertain fate, "you may dispel all your doubts

doubts and fears—and, as the charming poet says,

“ Now let me clasp thee to my heart,
Thus sink in softness on thy breast.
No cares shall haunt us, dangers part,
For ever loving, and for ever blest.”

Hereon she advanced to Charles, with an air of theatrical extasy, when he, instead of receiving her inviting embrace, drew back a few paces, with the utmost precipitation, and abruptly said, “ I am greatly indebted for the honor—the happiness, you designed me; little as I expected an offer of this kind from a Lady of your years;—but I am precluded from all possibility of accepting it, as my affections have been long and unalterably engaged.”

“ A Lady of my years,” reiterated the astonished and enraged widow, “ why, I am almost petrified at your assurance in using such an expression. My years—what, I suppose then you think I am too old to inspire *the tender sentiment*. This comes
now

now of your ignorance of fashionable life, and fashionable women. For had you known either, Sir, you could not have been ignorant that many a woman, ten years older than I am, has managed to keep those still at her feet, for whom the babies of sixteen and twenty have been in vain sighing."

"After what I have already said, Mrs. Froth," replied Charles, "it would be impertinent in me to add another syllable further on the subject, than that I shall ever retain a grateful regard for the esteem which you have honoured me with." So saying, he wished her a good night, and hurried up to his own room, leaving her possessed with all those passions which operate with the greatest violence on the female mind.

CHAP. XXIII.

En novus hominum ordo.

LIPSIUS. Epist.

ON the day that Charles had left Mrs. Froth ready to burst with rage at her offer being rejected, a young man of the name of Pivot called upon him ; a few particulars of whose history it will not be foreign to our purpose to relate.

His father had been the agent of a baronet, who so busied himself in the affairs of other people, that he had no time and less inclination to look into his own. The consequence
of

of which was, that with a great nominal rent-roll, he was often pushed for money. His agent being able to accommodate him with the sums that he occasionally wanted, contrived, by that means, to obtain for little or nothing a very snug estate of him. Shortly after he obtained that estate, he died, and a few days before this event, he settled it on his eldest son, although ever seemed to be fonder of the youngest. The lawyer who made his will, being also an old acquaintance, took the liberty of asking why he made so liberal a provision for his eldest son, and bequeathed only a few hundreds to the youngest, whom he always considered as his favorite. "For a very good reason," replied the whimsical agent, "Bob is such a thorough blockhead, that he never could exist without an estate to support him; whereas Jack is so sharp a fellow, that he will make his way in the world without a sixpence in his pocket."

A youth of this promise, the attorney thought might soon be converted into a
useful

useful member of his profession ; and happening at that time to be in want of a clerk, he articulated Jack to him soon after the decease of his father. But a country town was too narrow a sphere for Jack's aspiring genius. As soon therefore as he had served his clerkship, he repaired to London, and was not long before he got into a lucrative practice in the city. If real knowledge, however, in his profession, had been the sole requisite for his success, we are afraid, that Mr. Jack Pivot, with all his talents, would have ever remained in the back-ground. For no one could be more averse to the drudgery of study than he was. After revolving, therefore, many plans in his mind, by which he should escape from it, and yet never lose sight of the main chance, he at last hit on the following original scheme for the attainment of those opposite ends.

Having rather a genteel person and appearance, Jack took the greatest pains to obtain an introduction into all the public assemblies in the vicinity of the metropolis ;
and

and whenever he saw an ill-looking girl, with whom no one would dance, he was sure to offer his services on that occasion. Deeply skilled in whist, picquet, quadrille, and casino, for Hoyle was much oftener in his hands than Blackstone, he was ever ready at the beck of any old Lady to make one of her party. In back-gammon and billiards also he had made no small proficiency. It was an invariable rule with him to avoid playing with a person at either of those games, but if he could not be excused, he always contrived to let him come off the conqueror.

By means so singular, and seemingly so unlikely of ensuring his ends, Jack Pivot managed to pick up a very comfortable income. For the ugly girl with whom he danced, or the old lady with whom he sat down at cards, was generally induced by his plausible address, and well-timed compliments, to introduce him to her family, and when *he had once got his feet under their mahogany*, to use a favorite expression
of

of his, he seldom failed, by the assiduous attention he paid to the head of the house, and by a masterly study of his or her foibles and humours, to have the transacting of their legal affairs.

It was at one of the Hampstead assemblies, that Pivot first met Mrs. Froth; and he very soon after became her attorney, in consequence of his paying the most polite attentions to her feelings at that place. A forward young miss, being reprimanded by the widow, for presuming to stand above her in a country dance, she pertly answered in the hearing of Pivot, it would be some time before Mrs. Froth would have the right of again talking to her in the way she had done that night, as the young men had better taste than to like old women for their partners. Upon which, Pivot immediately stepped up to Mrs. Froth, and begged the honor of her hand for the two next dances. So unexpected an offer quite revived Mrs. Froth, who was just ready to sink under the mortification of being called an old woman.

Therefore,

Therefore, when Pivot afterwards insinuated to her how much he admired maturer beauties, she could not refrain from giving him in the course of the evening an invitation to see her; in short, an intimacy from that time commenced between them, which led in the sequel to his having the management of her pecuniary concerns.

Pivot had supped several times with Charles at the widow's apartments, and observing what a wishful eye she cast upon him, he concluded that it would not be long before he became *her property*; taking it for granted, that so poor a fellow as he knew Charles to be, would greedily snap at the bait held out to him. Agreeably to this supposition, he conceived it to be his interest to cultivate the acquaintance of Charles; and to shew him, what a man of consequence he was, and how well received in the most dashing circles, he engaged his company to a client of his at Hampstead, to dine with some characters, as he said, of the first dash and fashion; and it
was

was for this purpose, that he had now called upon Charles. Nothing, however, but a strong curiosity on the part of Charles, to see who were these men of dash and fashion, would have induced him to accept this invitation, for his mind was far from being in a state of ease to take any delight in the company of strangers.

In the course of their ride to Hampstead, Pivot threw out some hints, judging that the inhabitant of a second floor had not been much used to what he called first society, for the regulation of Charles's conduct at this visit, which he promised with the utmost seriousness of countenance faithfully to observe. "But pray," said Charles, perceiving that some doubts still existed in his mind, that he would say or do some ridiculous thing that might disgrace his introducer, "can you tell me the names of the gentlemen whom I am to meet?"

"Why," replied Pivot, "the party will be very select to-day. It will only consist, besides ourselves, of Seed, the corn-factor; Wick,

Wick, the wax-chandler ; Batch, the biscuit maker ; and Dick Comet."

" And pray what occupation," said Charles, " may the last gentleman follow ?"

" Can it be possible," cried Pivot, involuntarily stopping his gig, from astonishment, " that you never heard of Dick Comet the under-writer ;—who is at the head of every great boxing, cricket, tennis, and running match in the kingdom ; and is as well known in St. James's as in St. Giles's-street. Split me, if you had asked this question of Alloy, he would have blown me to the whole set, and I should never again be *fanned* down to Staines or Windsor in their curricles and barouches. Pray don't then, my dear fellow, for my sake, say you never heard of Comet, if Alloy should ask you that question."

" Well," replied Charles, who could not forbear laughing at the serious manner in which he addressed him on this subject, " that you may not be brought to shame

on my account, I will pretend to be as familiarly acquainted with his name, as I am with that of Pope or Johnson."

"Oh, you'll find Comet," said the attorney, "the life and charm of our society, take my word for it."

By this time, they had arrived at the house, and very soon after, Mr. Alloy, his wife and sister made their appearance. Mr. Alloy was an eminent silversmith, and having acquired a good fortune by his trade, he all of a sudden took it into his head, to set up for a man of fashion. Of the age of forty, in dress, manners, and conversation, he might have passed for twenty. But with all his miserable affectation, he never forgot what Pivot called the main-chance. His wife and sister were the exact counterparts of himself. Now, as their great oracle Comet had told them, that it was vastly ungenteeled to receive their visitors with an air of politeness, they just moved their heads to Pivot and Charles on their entrance, and then took up the novels they were reading, while Alloy, turning

turning to the former, said, " Have you seen Comet this morning. I supped with him last night at the British, and I understand he afterwards adjourned to Lord Stainbirth's, where he picked up a cool five hundred. Do you know my friend Comet, Mr. Beauford? laying a peculiar emphasis on the word friend.

Luckily for Charles's veracity, and Pivot's credit, a servant that instant announced Mr. Wick, Mr. Seed, and Mr. Batch; and, as Alloy had been told by his fashionable Mentor, that it was not stylish to be too inquisitive about any thing, he did not repeat the question. The whole party now beginning to talk about every day-people and every day-occurrences, Charles had leisure to take a survey of the furniture of the room, which, like its master, he thought was only fit to excite derision and contempt. For having observed in the great houses which he had lately seen in the way of business, that the articles of furniture were in general bulky and massive, Alloy had crammed into a
room

room not loftier than eight feet high, and thirty feet square, chairs, tables, couches, and footstools of such enormous size, that the very decorations of the room threatened to weigh down the floor.

When the clock struck six, Alloy began to exhibit symptoms of great impatience at the non-arrival of Comet, and several times was on the point of saying, that he wished it was fashionable to be punctual to the hour of dinner. Shortly afterwards, that quintessence of *bon ton*, the all dashing Mr. Comet made his appearance. "What has detained you so long?" said Alloy, (for they were to have dined at five) "I hope no accident."

"Accident," reiterated Comet, who had sat himself down between Mrs. Alloy and her sister, the moment he had entered, having looked at the rest of the party without seeming to know them; "Yes, and a damned unlucky accident it was. My brother-in-law, the *glue-pot* *, came to me, just

* Parson.

as I was setting out, to see if he could not raise any *quills** from me; so that if I had not pressed *the muscle well*†, I should have been thrown out of your good feed.

“ Did you bleed freely, Comet,” said Wick.

“ Not I,” replied Comet, “ although he *threw the hatchet famously*‡. But how comes such a *caster* as you, Badge, to appear in *pigs*§. Seed, I know, is that *fishing-rod hand*||, that he always patronizes *pigs*¶; but I did not expect it in a fellow of your *larking cut***. Did you, *Latitat*?” (the appellation which he always gave to Pivot.)

If Charles was astonished at hearing this jargon, more unintelligible to him than the Chinese alphabet, he was no less astonished to find how mightily relished and thoroughly understood it was by Mrs. Alloy and Miss Alloy, who at every word almost that Comet

* Money.

† Rode fast.

‡ Told great

untruths.

§ Boots.

|| Expert coachman.

¶ Boots.

** Dashing appearance.

uttered,

uttered, simpered as much as if they had been listening to the pleasantry of a man of real fashion. As Comet, however, was too great an eater to be a great talker at dinner, there was a suspension of this pitiful slang till the cloth was removed; during which time, Mr. Alloy had full opportunity, without receiving any interruption from his principal guest, to scold his servants, and find fault with his cook, a practice which, with all his gentility, he could not leave off. Directly that the women had withdrawn, and Comet had recovered from the fatigues of eating, he again opened with his new-fangled phraseology, by saying, he had drank so much *swipes** at dinner, that Alloy must positively give *Archbishop after the Bishop* †, or else he should be cut presently.

In this strain, Comet proceeded for half an hour, to the no small delight of those around him; for he was anxious to draw

* Warm ale.

† Claret after Port.

Charles out, and to decide what manner of fellow he was, having surmised, from his striking figure and appearance, that he belonged to his sett. But Charles was soon disgraced in his opinion, and regarded as nobody, when he found him incapable of answering certain questions that he put to him, and that he was Pivot's friend, which last discovery was a clear sign with him of mediocrity of situation. Pivot, however, solely intent upon showing Charles what a first rate person Comet was in the dashing circles, said, "I will thank you, Comet, to tell me if the dispute has been at last settled, whether the large button is your or your friend Lord Stainbirth's invention."

"The commoners at the *east end* of the town, to be sure," replied Batch. "For who dreams now of referring the origin of fashions to any persons at the west end of the town."

"And is no part of the fashionable sphere upheld by them," said Charles, willing to see the impudent lengths which Mr. Badge
and

and his associates would go to in their assertions on this point.

“ No,” replied Comet, with a bravadoing and magisterial air, as upon all questions relative to fashion, he had “ a voice potential,” at Alloy’s house ; “ for who, but us of the city, fill the pit at the Opera House, the lobbies of the Theatre, and, in the summer season give the ton to the watering-places, and to all the flashy young farmers in the neighbourhood of them. To be short;—did you ever hear any mention of people of rank *where such as I am?*”

“ No, indeed, I have not,” replied Charles, with the utmost gravity of countenance.

“ Rank, that for rank,” cried Seed, snapping his fingers at the time. “ In a commercial country, like this, wealth supplies the place of nobility.”

“ To be sure it does,” said Comet, “ We are the boys that now make all the dash. The high-born peer, instead of taking the lead, as formerly, now faithfully copies us. For
who,

who, let me ask, but us, taught them, among innumerable other things, to make all their journeys on a Sunday; when, in the time of Old Square Toes, my father, there was not a carriage of any description to be seen on the road that day. And as to the small gentry, we have long tipt them the go-by."

"Yes," said Wick, "we who get fortunes in trade, have long pushed that class of persons in the back-ground. And they are now no more to be seen at fashionable parties, and fashionable places than they are in a box like mine at the Opera."

"*My box* at the Opera," repeated Alloy; "Come, that's a good joke, now, to call it your's, when six fellows, besides yourself, pay twenty guineas each to poke their noses in it. Damn it, I would not be such a fool as that either, for the sake of being reckoned a *Count* by any one."

"Nor would I be such a coxcomb," replied Wick, reddening with passion, "to be at the expence of hiring a carriage while I

was at Brighton, in order to make those believe, who did not know me in town, that I kept one."

"I understand your sneers," said Alloy, rising from his chair in a great passion; and, if you were not in my house, I'd"—

"Coolly, coolly, Alloy," said Comet, "or else you and Wick must smell powder before we part."

This hint had the desired effect of immediately rendering these sons of ire as gentle as lambs to each other. Charles then took the opportunity of leaving them to their trashy conversation about their grooms, horses, carriages, and mistresses. By withdrawing from them, however, Charles had only *gained a loss*, according to the Irishman's expression; for the moment that he had joined Mrs. and Miss Alloy, his ears were assailed again by the same silly talk of fashion and fashionables, while the names of several demireps of rank, who, if they had not quitted their own proper society, would have been driven from it, were repeated to

Charles

Charles with all the vanity of appearing great, as being among the number of *their very particular friends*. Fortunately, for his patience, the whole party soon came in to take their coffee; and shortly afterwards Pivot's gig was at the door to the inexpressible satisfaction of Charles, who, as he left the house, could not help repeating to himself these lines of Butler, in allusion to the disgusting absurdities which he had that day witnessed.

“ Should once the world resolve t’abolish
All that’s ridiculous and foolish,
It would have nothing left to do,
T’apply in jest or earnest to,
No bus’ness of importance, play,
Or state, to pass the time away.”

CHAP. XXIV.

— In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange—

SHAKSPEARE.

SOME mornings after Charles had paid the curious visit mentioned in the last chapter, Pivot came to his lodgings, and as soon as Miss Beauford had withdrawn, said, “ So I find you have made a conquest of the widow. But how the plague came you to slight it. Don’t you know, my boy, she has got the *mo-pusses* ; and, by the bye, she has got a cough, which all the æsculapian art can
never

never cure. It was almost therefore next to impossible, that you had not, in a few years, the estate without the incumbrance."

"Your conjectures may be very right," answered Charles, "but I have no inclination to enrich myself at the price of my happiness."

"Why, you stoic hearted fellow," said Pivot, "when even now the ardent devotion of Mrs. Froth to you is such, that she is determined, *nolens or volens*, to have your person, in one way, if she can't in another."

"What am I to understand," hastily replied Charles, "by her having of my person?"

"Only this," rejoined Pivot, "that I am commissioned by her to introduce *John Doe and Richard Roe* to you, if you cannot pay directly the fifty pounds which you sometime ago borrowed of her."

"*Borrowed of her*," reiterated Charles with astonishment; "why, she absolutely forced that sum on me, and insisted on becoming my banker, if I wanted more."

"So

“ So then,” said Pivot, “ intreating for money on your knees, *you* call forcing it on you.”

“ Gracious Heav’n, is it possible,” exclaimed Charles, “ that this woman can have uttered so barefaced a falsehood.—Well, Sir, I suppose then to goal I must go ; for it is utterly beyond my power to discharge the debt immediately.”

“ About a week ago,” replied Pivot, “ you were so kind to recommend me several books for instruction in my profession ; and I remember you laughed heartily when I told you how many six and eight pences I should lose were I to become the painful plodder that the study of your books would make me. In gratitude, however, for that advice, which I really believe was meant well, I would now recommend you to acquire a greater portion of *common sense*, which one of your famous poets calls,

————— “ The gift of Heav’n,
And though no science, fairly worth the seven.”

“ I

“ I shall be obliged to you,” said Charles, “ to point out in what particular instance I have departed from common sense.”

“ Why, who but such an ignoramus as yourself,” replied Pivot, “ would not have suspected that the widow’s writing to you the next day, after your refusal of her charms, and requesting, as she tells me she did, the immediate payment of the fifty pounds in consequence of an unexpected demand upon her for a large sum of money, was only to get an acknowledgment of the debt in your own hand-writing. Now, if I had not been an *attorney*, I should have had more *mother-wit* in me than to have sent a written answer to her note.”

“ Such conduct,” said Charles, “ under existing circumstances, might have been prudent, but it does not appear to me that it would have been very honorable.”

“ Tricking is all fair in love, as little Isaac says in the play,” replied Pivot, “ and my logic would have soon convinced me, or else
it

it would have been worth nothing, that this was a love and not a money affair."

"Well," said Charles, "as you seem so plentifully stocked with that useful commodity, common sense, perhaps you would supply me with a little on the present occasion, conceiving, as you do, that I stand in want of some."

"Why lookye, Beauford," replied Pivot, "though I pay the old and the ugly a great deal of attention to save myself a great deal of reading, yet good friends as they are in general of mine, I won't deny but that they can do as many scurvy tricks, as those of the rising generation. Therefore, my common sense bids me advise, as you cannot do the *needful* at present, to take to your heels as fast as possible—in other words, find out this very evening some snug lodging near Kensington Gravel-pits, as that is a place which the widow by no sort of chance ever visits, and there remain till you no longer fear the devouring fangs of that hyæna.—She has unwittingly too given you herself a fine opportunity

opportunity of embracing this advice. For having some sense of shame left within her, she has retired into the country, with the intention of remaining there till the writ has been served upon you. Besides, by your getting out of her way, you have a double chance of getting out of your present difficulties ; for it is even betting, that when I send her word the bird is flown, she'll fall into so great a rage, as to burst a vessel, and thus make her exit."

Charles lost not a moment in putting this friendly advice into execution, since there was another pressing reason why his departure should be as quick as possible, but which, in the critical state of his affairs, he judged it safest not to communicate to the attorney. About a week before he had received this visit from Pivot, his taylor came to him to request the immediate payment of his bill, and when Charles pointed out to his recollection, the latitude of credit which he had always given him before, the man told him, that he must not now put himself on a
footing

footing with those customers who had friends to answer for their extravagances, as there was every reason to suspect that he could refer him to no one who would be responsible for what he owed.

This insolent speech, which was intentional, provoked Charles to that degree, that he, haughtily bade him leave the room, and wait his convenience for the payment of the bill. The very next morning, Charles received a letter from the taylor's solicitor, to say, that if he did not discharge the debt which he owed to his client, in the course of a fortnight, he was instructed to proceed against him without any further application. The taylor would never have dreamt of being so importunate in his demands, or so insulting in his behaviour, if Mr. Featherweight, who, by the merest accident, found out that his hated rival employed the same taylor as himself, had not desired his servant to insinuate to the man, that Charles was a person of no sort of principle, and in consequence of which he had
been

been dismissed from Earl Altamont's service; so long then as he suffered him to be at liberty, he would stand no chance of getting his money, but the moment he clapped him into prison, there would be friends with all his worthlessness disposed enough to advance the money to pay the debt, rather than let him continue for any length of time in confinement. This base and artful manœuvre of Featherweight, induced the taylor to act in the manner that he did; and Charles, sensible of his utter inability to discharge the account at this time, was therefore in the greatest consternation of mind till he had removed to the Gravel-pits.

For more than a week, Charles shut himself up in his new lodging, and never left it on any occasion whatsoever; so violent were his fears of being discovered. This close confinement with his intense application to his books, began however to affect his health sensibly, and a severe fit of illness would in all probability have been the consequence, if his sister had not at last prevailed on him,
by

by her tears and intreaties to devote as formerly a considerable portion of his time to the exercise of walking.

One morning, while he was sitting in an alcove, in the most unfrequented part of Kensington Gardens, and pondering on his sad fate, he was suddenly startled from his reverie, by the screams of a woman, at no great distance from him. Ever forward in offering his aid when a female required it, he ran immediately to the spot from whence the shriek proceeded. On coming thither, he saw a genteel, well-dressed woman, with a man by her side, attempting to embrace her. As Charles advanced towards them, he desisted from his rudeness, while the woman cried out, "For Heaven's sake; Sir, protect and rescue me from this man."

"Come, now," said the fellow, with the utmost coolness and effrontery, "you have played your part so far, exceeding well; but give it over, lest I should be after letting the young gentleman know who you really

are. Why, did not you come here, *Jemima*, purposely to meet me? And because I did not keep my appointment exactly, you chose to be in the pouts; and when I offered to take what you have for this week promised me, you sat up that squawl, which you see, if the young gentleman had not believed this explanation, might have brought on a serious scuffle between us."

"Oh, if that be the case," said Charles, "I have no farther business here."

"As I hope for mercy hereafter," exclaimed the woman, violently agitated, and catching hold of Charles's arm, as he was preparing to go, "this is the first time in my life I ever beheld this impudent wretch.—A few minutes ago he passed me, and seeing that I was quite alone, began first to assail me with his impertinence, and afterwards with his embraces. Appearances may be against me in being here alone; but indeed, indeed, Sir, I have not uttered a syllable but what is strictly true."

Then

"Then," said Charles, stepping up to her, "I am your defender. And if, after I have conducted this lady to a place of safety, you, Sir, can have any thing to say, to my rescuing her from your brutal insolence, I shall return to the place where I now am."

Charles then offered his arm to the terrified female; when, just as he was turning round, the fellow in an instant dealt him a furious blow with the stick that he had in his hand, and which so staggered Charles, that he nearly fell to the ground. Directly, however, he had recovered from the stroke, Charles attacked the rascal with such skill and courage, that he fairly knocked him down. On his rising up, he made a desperate thrust at Charles with his tuck stick, but which he adroitly pushed aside with his left hand, and then immediately closed with his antagonist, and felled him once more to the ground. Charles then snatched up the stick, which, when the fellow perceived, he immediately cried out, "Why you won't strike me

when I am down?" "Yes, but I will," said Charles, "for I don't consider myself as fighting with such a villain, but only chastising him." Upon which he laid the stick upon him with that strength, that it at last broke into a hundred pieces.

In the midst of this rencontre, the screams of the woman were so loud and incessant, that at length they brought several persons to the spot, but not before Charles had taken the most ample vengeance for the blow he had received. When Charles had explained to those around him the cause of his treating the fellow in the manner that he had done, and extorted from him a confession that he had no acquaintance with the person he had so wantonly insulted, he was suffered to sneak away. Perceiving, however, that the lady still trembled, he insisted upon conducting her home. As they approached the garden gate, they were met by a female servant with a child in her arms, which the lady immediately took, and after kissing it several times with maternal fondness, said to Charles,

Charles, " Ah, Sir, how truly thankful will the father of my child be for the services which you have this day rendered me. He will express to you much better than I can, the gratitude we shall ever retain for your generous conduct. How happy too, I am, to think that we shall find him at home on our return, as he has no mercantile engagements to day after three o'clock.

In the course of their walk, the lady informed Charles, that her child having been at nurse near Kensington Gardens, she had walked that morning from Craven Hill, where she lived, to see it ; but on finding the infant asleep when she came, she had strolled into the gardens, till it was awake.

On coming to a detached house near Craven Hill, the lady stopped and said, " Now, Sir, I am at home,—pray walk in," opening a little gate, which led through a pretty shrubbery up to the house. " Is your Master returned home, William," said she, on the door being opened by a servant in a plain livery, " Yes, Ma'am," replied the man, " he has
been

been at home this half hour, and is now in the drawing-room."

"Have the goodness then," said the lady, addressing herself to Charles, "to follow me, and as you have carried my child so far, I will trouble you to take him up stairs;" for Charles in his good nature, seeing the maid-servant fatigued with her burden, had insisted on relieving her from it.

The moment the lady entered the room, she exclaimed, "Oh, my dear Simpson," as he advanced towards her, "I have brought your child to see you to day, and with him the deliverer of his mother's——" Here she stopped short, and well she might, for Charles at that instant cried out, "Gracious heavens, is it possible that, in the person of Mr. Simpson, I should behold Earl Altamont?"

"Earl Altamont," reiterated the lady.—
"Why you surely rave. This is not Earl Altamont, but Mr. Simpson, of Aldermanbury."

"Either, Madam, you are wilfully ignorant,
or

or grossly imposed upon," said Charles, putting the child into her arms ; but be that as it may, whilst I have life or memory, this meeting will never be effaced from my recollection." So saying, he rushed out of the house ; when his Lordship sunk back on the sofa, in speechless astonishment and dismay.

" And can it be possible," said his Lordship's mistress, after she had recovered her powers of utterance, which the words of Charles had quite bereft her of, " that in the plodding Mr. Simpson, I see the great Earl Altamont, of whom so many fine things are said in the public prints about his wisdom goodness, justice, and humanity. Was it consistent with those qualities to impose upon a poor, friendless, persecuted woman, with a tale which——"

" Cease your reproaches," replied the Earl, striking his hand with almost frantic violence on his forehead, " and tell me at once what cursed accident brought the man hither, whom, above all others, I should

have wished to have been ignorant of our connection."

Having communicated to him the whole circumstance of their meeting, his Lordship, as soon as she had finished, said, "Now mark me, once for all,—if you again mention or allude to this day's transaction, that moment will I renounce you and your child for ever."

"Silent I may be," said she, "but it is not in my power to forget what I owe to the stranger." So saying, she immediately retired with the child to her chamber, leaving his Lordship a prey to two passions which are the most hostile to internal tranquillity and happiness—shame and anger.

CHAP. XXV.



But lovely concord, and most sacred peace
Doth nourish friendship, and fast friendship breede ;
Weak she makes strong, and strong things does increase ;

Till it the pitch of highest praise exceeds ;
Brave be the warres, as honourable deeds,
By which she tryumphs over ire and pride,
And winnes an olive girlond for her meeds.

SPENSER,



LORD ALTAMONT's taste for intrigue was as great a matter of astonishment to Charles, as it is, perhaps, to our readers ; while the rage, alarm, and mortification which the Earl felt at its being discovered by the person, whom he wished to be thought as conspicuous for his decorum

decorum in private life, as he flattered himself he was for the display of brilliant talents in his public capacity, hindered him from enjoying the repose which visited that night the pillow of the virtuous Charles. With all allowances, indeed, for human frailty, it would be difficult to apologize for the base acts which his Lordship had recourse to, before he could succeed in the accomplishment of his wishes ; we mean, before he could prevail on the object of his passion to live with him as his mistress, much as the lax manners of the age may be urged in extenuation of his forming such a connection. But, as we do not wish our readers to lose all sort of respect for the Earl, we shall carefully abstain from entering into any details of this part of his misconduct.

If Charles, however, had not a torturing conscience to banish sleep from his eyes, his reflections, when he awoke, were scarcely of a less gloomy and distressing cast. He now saw himself in a situation the most afflictive to an independent spirit; and to
increase

increase his mental suffering there appeared no likelihood of being extricated from it. Notwithstanding all his labours by day and by night, the miseries of poverty were staring him full in the face. It was to no purpose to ward off an evil, the existence of which, put to flight an host of imaginary ones, that his sister had sold all her ornaments ; that he had adopted a scheme of parsimonious economy ; still the evil which he so much dreaded, instead of being kept at a great distance, approached nearer and nearer every hour. He was without money sufficient to pay his lodgings, or almost to purchase the necessaries of life. In such a crisis, the wisest might be perplexed, and the boldest might despair. Charles, however, in the midst of all his wretchedness, was composed and resigned. For, though the bitter tears of disappointment now and then coursed down his manly cheeks, when he thought what further privations his beloved sister might be obliged to undergo, as the total absence of selfishness was a distinguishing excellence in his character ; yet, thus

thus destitute of every resource, he confidently relied on the gracious assurance of Him, who in the transcendant goodness of his nature, has promised his support to those who abandon themselves to no desponding scepticism of his protection in the hour of their trial, but who regard themselves as acting in the whole course of their existence under his observation, care, and inspection. Charles was indeed a sincere Christian; and without being forward to claim that title, he would have considered himself hardened into an insensibility to all those duties, for the performance of which he was sent into the world, if he had felt abashed to confess his faith before the most fashionable company, from the dread of being accounted a religious bigot. Nor did he fall so miserably short of showing his love to his Saviour, or live so little in the awful sense of his ever-during presence, as seldom to be seen in a place of public worship, lest he should be exposed to the imputation of hypocritical piety.

It

It was the day after the interview already described between Charles and Earl Altamont had taken place, that the former was engaged with his sister to dine at Mr. Wormer's country-house near Acton. The worthy book seller had often before pressed Charles to spend a day there, and if pride and independence had not been regarded as synonymous terms by him, Mr. Wormer would have been happy, had he thoroughly known his situation, to have advanced him money enough to discharge his debt to the widow and the taylor, on the chance of future payment. Pondering on the past, the present, and the possible, Charles commenced his walk to Mr. Wormer's house; and though it was the season of the year in which he chiefly delighted, when all the beauties of the spring were bursting forth, he seemed quite insensible to them, as he proceeded with his sister through the different meadows, which conducted them to Acton Common, near which Mr. Wormer's house was situated,

In

In turning the corner of a shady lane, which led to the place they were going to, Miss Beauford, who was a few steps before Charlès, suddenly put up her parasol, and in that moment, a horse bolted, and threw its rider into the hedge. Charles was so buried in thought, that he even did not perceive what had happened, until his sister, in an agony of voice, cried out to him, "Oh, help him, help him, dearest brother." In an instant Charles was by the stranger's side. On extricating him from his situation, he recognized the person of Warpdale. For a few moments, both were silent, while their eyes were rivetted on each other; at last, Warpdale said with a faltering voice, while his cheeks glowed with confusion, "I am ashamed, yet happy to meet you."

"I hope you are not hurt, Sir," replied Charles, in the most distant tone imaginable, for a sense of his past ingratitude awakened all the pride and indignation of his soul.

"Not in the least," rejoined Warpdale, scarcely conscious what he was saying, so much

much did he feel disconcerted by the chilling behaviour of Charles.

“ We will then join my sister,” said Charles, “ who, I am afraid, was the innocent cause of your accident.” Warpdale bowed, and in silence followed him.

In an embarrassed, but respectful manner, he paid his compliments to Miss Beauford; while she, confounded by her brother's calm but severe countenance, only uttered a few inarticulate words, expressive of the pleasure that she felt at seeing him escape unhurt. Several times did Warpdale make an effort to begin a conversation with Miss Beauford, whilst his groom went in pursuit of his horse; but the mutual constraint into which they were thrown by the presence of Charles, stopt them from proceeding any farther than one unmeaning question and answer. During the whole of this distressing scene, Miss Beauford had not once the courage to raise her eyes from the ground; and at last became so overwhelmed and confounded, by the inexplicable silence of her
brother,

brother, that a dimness seemed to obscure her faculties, and she was nearly losing all consciousness, when, in endeavouring to shake off the faintness she felt, by walking faster, her foot slipped, and she would have fallen, had not Warpdale caught her on his arm. A burning blush overspread her face, as she hastily arose from it, which Charles perceiving, and suspecting, from the extraordinary agitation which she had displayed at the sight of Warpdale, and the deep melancholy which tinged his countenance, that they were dearer to each other than he had before imagined, in pity to his sister's anguished feelings, now relaxed from his cold and haughty treatment of Warpdale, and in a friendly tone of voice, begged his assistance to support her. When they approached Mr. Wormer's house, which was only a few hundred yards farther, Warpdale, fearing that if he allowed this opportunity of reinstating himself in the good opinion of Charles, to escape, the time would be gone for ever, after a short struggle, summoned up the resolution
to

to say to him, as they entered the house, "Will you indulge me with half an hour's private conversation before we part?" "Willingly," replied Charles, leading him into a small room adjoining the parlour, by the desire of Wormer who had overheard this request.

Directly they were seated, Warpdale, in hurried accents said, while his heart throbbed again with the mingled sensations of anguish and shame, at the remembrance of what had passed at their last meeting, "I can readily conceive, Mr. Beauford, that the sight of me must bring to mind the baseness of my conduct when last we saw each other. Nay, further, it must dispose you to think that one, who has acted as I have done, must be lost to every sort of right feeling that belongs to our nature. Believe me, however——"

"And believe me," replied Charles, interrupting him, and presenting his hand to him at the same time, "that the man who does not embrace with avidity the first occa-

sion of converting an enemy into a friend, never deserves to taste the blessings which friendship can bestow."

"Ever noble and forgiving, as I first knew you," exclaimed Warpdale, grasping affectionately the hand which was extended towards him, while he was obliged to have recourse to his handkerchief to conceal his emotion, "how shall I merit such kindness."

"By never again alluding to the subject," replied the generous Charles.

"Add one more obligation to those which you have already conferred on me," said Warpdale, and tell me, while his agitated looks shewed that he was half afraid to ask the question, "was it you who took your sister from Mrs. Dudley's?"

"It was," replied Charles.

"Oh fool that I have been," exclaimed Warpdale, "to credit the insinuation that I did."

"What insinuation?" eagerly asked Charles.

"You

“ You may remember,” rejoined Warpdale, his eyes now sparkling with hope and joy, “ that you first met your sister in Mrs. Dudley’s garden. It so happened, that my unlucky destiny conducted me a few minutes before in sight of the very place where you were locked in each other’s embraces. Frantic with despair, at seeing Miss Beauford in the arms of a stranger, (for the virtues and beauty of your sister, my dear Beauford, possess my whole heart,) I rushed home, and it was some days before I could regain sufficient composure of mind to call at Mrs. Dudley’s to ask the name of this hated favourite. Before I had time, however, to gain the information that I wished, Miss Dudley said, directly on my entrance,—“ So Mr. Warpdale, my charming friend is at last gone with her favorite.” My brain whirled again at this speech ; for I felt, at once, that your sister was lost [to me for ever. Immediately afterwards some one came into the room, and from what I heard, I determined never more to utter her name. In

the hopes too, that a variety of objects would assist in extinguishing a passion which had caused me such misery, I set off, a few days after, from my seat on a tour through Scotland and Ireland. On my return, which was about a month ago, chance threw me into the company of Eaglehurst, and from him I learnt, in consequence of his asking me if I had not known you at college, how nobly you had conducted yourself, in every point of view, in your late situation at Altamont House."

"Is he in town now?" said Charles.

"Yes," replied Warpdale, "and it was but yesterday that he said to me, if you wish to see splendid misery, let me introduce you to Altamont House. My pity, however, is reserved for the unfortunate Charles, wherever he is."

"Gracious heavens," cried Charles, with energy, his fine face flushed with emotion, "I hope Lady Emily is not ill."

"Her health," rejoined Warpdale, "has been in a very delicate state for this last month.

month. And, I understand, she laments you as one who is far, far removed from her. For Eaglehurst tells me, that she has given credit to a silly story which her woman has somewhere picked up, of your having been obliged to leave this country, in consequence of your embarrassed circumstances. Need I then add, how it glads my heart to perceive, that there is no foundation for such a report."

At these last words Charles shook his head, and smiled languidly at Warpdale, but without making any reply.

"Permit me now," continued Warpdale, "to address you on a subject which, I will own, is of all things nearest to my heart. To tell you, that my affections are indissolubly fixed on your sister, after what I have already related, would be only to——"

"I anticipate what you are going to say," replied Charles, interrupting him, "but give me leave to observe, that my sister has no fortune; she is as poor as I am, and poorer it is scarcely possible to be."

"Now,"

“ Now,” exclaimed Warpdale, in a voice of displeasure, “ you have, for the first time in your life, done me an injustice. For great as my faults have been, the love of money was never among the number of them. Could I have conquered my unnatural envy of your superior endowments, I would readily have purchased your friendship at the price of half my fortune. Do not therefore think, that because I have done one vile act, I am capable of every other. Believe me, when I declare, that I would sooner have the sister of Charles Beauford for my wife, with no other dowry than her beauty and attainments, than the first title with the first fortune in the kingdom. But ah! after she learnt my conduct to you, she must quite despise me, however high I might have been in her esteem, and I flatter myself that I did stand tolerably well.”

“ Generous Warpdale,” cried Charles with warmth, sensibly touched at this disinterested proof of his attachment to his beloved sister, “ the best reparation that I can
9 make

make for my unworthy suspicion, is to tell you, that you are by no means indifferent to Louisa. An avowal which I make with the more readiness, lest you should imagine that my sister was influenced by mercenary views in accepting your offered hand. And rest also assured, that what passed between us at Oxford, has never been whispered to the ear of any one."

"My dear, dear Beauford," said Warpdale, rising from his seat, and, in the fulness of his joy, throwing himself into the arms of his friend at this speech, "how impatient shall I be till I can unite the title of relation with that of friend. I cannot leave this house, till I am rendered the happiest of created beings, by hearing from Louisa's own lips, the declaration which you have just now made."

"Be it so," replied Charles, "but not before the evening. In the mean while, as we are to be bound together in the closest ties, I think it right to give you a detailed account of my history, if it were only to shew

snew you with what heroic patience my sister has endured all the evils attendant upon poverty.”

Charles then imparted to him a full and impressive narrative of his connection with the Altamont family, his separation from it, and subsequent proceedings, omitting only his recent interview with the Earl, to which his friend listened with intense interest. When he had finished,—“ If ever I felt the value of riches, it is now,” exclaimed Warpdale, with the cordial warmth of friendship, when I can be enabled to disperse the temporary mist which envelopes your fine talents. Soon shall the proud and vindictive Earl Altamont see the man whom, when he forsook, was destined, in his imagination, to a life of obscurity, firmly seated in Parliament; where, if I am not widely mistaken, you will raise your name to a degree of reputation and splendour, that he has no conception of.”

Charles pressed the hand of his friend, and looking gratefully in his face, replied, “ I
thank

thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness, although your predictions have been too flatteringly expressed. But before I can except an offer, which shall give me a chance of gaining the public estimation, it would be an act of unpardonable ingratitude, did I not first ascertain the fate of my unfortunate uncle. For I have every reason to believe, in consequence of the information which I received a few days since from Mr. Wormer, that the report of his being sentenced with other Englishmen to the *guillotine*, was premature. As soon as I have the happiness of seeing you united to my sister, I shall become an American, and in that character I may hope, by your means, to get to Bourdeaux."

"I certainly cannot oppose a determination," said Warpdale, "so truly praiseworthy, but remember, that I shall expect nothing but silent acquiescence in the arrangements that I shall have made for you during your absence."

Charles replied with animated acknowledgments

ledgments of Warpdale's affection, when a servant knocked at the door, to let them know dinner was ready. As they were leaving the room, Mr. Wormer came to them, and having told Warpdale that his groom was just returned with the horse, requested to have the honor of his company to dinner, an invitation which, of course, was readily accepted by him.

Our readers may easily imagine that Miss Beauford's feelings were worked up to the highest pitch of curiosity and anxiety, during the close conference between her brother and Warpdale. When she had so unexpectedly come upon Warpdale, in the first moment of her surprise and agitation she had unconsciously put up her parasol, which occasioned his accident; and not till this had happened, did she herself know the powerful interest he had gained in her affections. On the entrance, of her brother and Warpdale, she could not help casting a side-long glance of inquisition at the countenance of the former, where, to her great surprise, for
much

much she had doubted as to the amicable result of this conference, she thought it was easy to read in it strong marks of happiness. Indeed, it did not require any very extraordinary penetration to make that discovery, for pleasure spoke in every tone of his voice, and when he was silent, his sparkling eyes evinced the joy of his heart. When dinner was over, which was enlivened by general hilarity, for all seemed to have caught the good spirits of Charles, and Mrs. Wormer with Miss Beauford were rising from their seats, Charles said, " You must not fatigue yourself, Louisa, by walking about Mr. Wormer's garden till we join you, as he proposes taking us to view the grounds of the seat close by, which afford a finished specimen of modern landscape gardening."

It was during this walk, that Warpdale seized an opportunity of revealing his passion to Miss Beauford, with all the eloquence which true love inspires ; while she, superior to silly airs of coquetry, blushing accepted the offer of his hand, when she understood

it

it had been made with the knowledge and approbation of her brother.

Far different were the sensations with which Charles departed from Mr. Wormer's house, to those that he entered with. And as he stood upon the steps of his humble lodging, at the close of this happy evening, accompanied by his sister and the delighted Warpdale, he turned to his friend and said, "I will not now ask you to come in, as the length of the walk, together with the events of the day, seem to have almost overcome Louisa; for, you know, that the heart may ache with joy as well as with pain; but we shall expect you here to-morrow at breakfast. 'Tis a sorry little place, but I wish you to see it, that you may at once feel what a wide distinction there is in going over the theory of poverty in one's thoughts, and drawing a romantic picture of it; to the sustaining it without a sigh or murmur, as this truly amiable girl has done."

"Good night then, my dear Charles," replied Warpdale, while his soul, too full
almost

almost for utterance, at the thought of all his adored Louisa had suffered, could only tenderly say "adieu till to-morrow," as he pressed her hand with fervency. Then beckoning to his groom, who had followed him at a distance, he mounted his horse, and, full of blissful emotions, galloped off to his magnificent mansion in Portman-square.

CHAP. XXVI.



Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

SHAKESPEARE.



MORNING had scarcely dawned, before Warpdale was up, and dressed. Never, indeed, did hours creep on more slowly with him, till the time came for his banker's to be opened; since not before, could he obtain the thousand pounds, which he intended to present immediately to Charles, to liberate him from his embarrassments, and to enable both him and his sister to make an appearance suitable to their former

former condition. In spite, however, of this delay, Warpdale contrived at ten o'clock to alight at Charles's door from his carriage; when the bright glance of joy with which Louisa met him, imparted a sensation to his heart, that he would not have exchanged for all that monarchs could bestow.

The moment breakfast was over, unable to bear the idea of his destined wife, and her beloved brother, submitting any longer to the inelegancies of their mean habitation, Warpdale proposed that they should ride to Baker-street, to look at some lodgings there, which he knew were disengaged, and when Miss Beauford withdrew to put on her cloak, he carelessly said to Charles, "Do me the favor to put these notes into your pocket, and be so good as to consider me in the light of your banker, a very suspicious expression by the bye, you will doubtless think," added he laughing, "after the novel explanation given of it by the ingenious and charming Mrs. Froth. But now give me your attention to a more serious subject. I should not
be

be doing justice to your feelings, if I did not suppose you were on the very tip-toe of impatience to commence your voyage to Bourdeaux. I am sure, therefore, that I gratify them as much as I do my own, in requesting your mediation with Louisa to name an early day for the completion of my happiness. She is, I know, above all affected delays, and the settlement of £4,000 a-year, which I intend to make on her, can be executed, I suppose, in a few days, dilatory as the gentlemen of the long robe are said to be upon these occasions."

"As she has given you her hand and her willing heart," replied Charles, "I am confident that Louisa, independent of my wishes to expedite my journey, has too much good sense to sacrifice the pleasure of obliging us both to any false notions of modesty or delicacy. My desire, therefore, is as great to second your proposal in this respect, as my objection is strong to your intended settlement, the generosity of which is such——"

"I beg

“ I beg your pardon, my dear Charles, for interrupting you,” hastily replied Warpdale, “ but upon this point I am inflexible : on every other, I am sanguine enough to believe that our sentiments and opinions will be in unison.”

At this moment Miss Beauford entered, and presently afterward they drove off to Baker-street. The elegance and the nearness of the lodgings to Portman-square, determined Charles to engage them immediately, at the request of Warpdale. When this arrangement had been settled, they went to Mr. Wormer's shop. This worthy man soon made his appearance. “ I come,” said Warpdale, cordially shaking him by the hand, since his kindness to Charles had excited in him a real sentiment of respect for his character, to avail myself of your assistance in forming my new library. I have not long since purchased a house in Portman-square, and as its late possessor was fonder of any thing than of literature, the room which he called his library, was not large enough to contain

an hundred volumes. I am building, therefore, a new one, and if you will, at your leisure, add to the catalogue of books which I shall in a few days send you, as many more as you may think worth the purchasing, I shall be much obliged to you."

While Warpdale had thus handsomely requited the bookseller for his kindness to Charles, and, with Miss Beauford, was looking at some beautiful specimens of typography, Charles had gone into the back parlour, to write a note to Mr. Pivot, requesting to see him the next morning at ten; which, when he had done, he took the opportunity of informing Mr. Wormer of the happy reverse of fortune he had experienced, by the approaching union of his sister with Warpdale, and of receiving his sincere congratulations upon that event.

The next morning, punctual to the hour of appointment, Pivot was at Charles's lodgings. "I think," said the attorney, with a significant look, as soon as he had seated himself,

himself, "that you find your town, in every respect preferable to your country lodgings."

"Your conjectures are tolerably right," replied Charles, smiling. "Pray which does Mrs. Froth now give the preference to?"

"Why, to say the truth," said Pivot, "I don't exactly know which, at present; for, would you believe it, she was silly enough to think that I was privy to your retreat, and therefore persisted that I was incompetent to manage her affairs; a process of reasoning, for which, I am sure, the file affords no precedent."

"Well," said Charles, "it is now in my power to discharge my debt to Mrs. Froth; and, as you have lost the making of one marriage settlement through me, you shall not be without my recommendation to draw up another."

"Are you going to be married then?" replied Pivot.

"No, but my sister shortly is," rejoined Charles.

"To whom, may I ask?" said he.

“ To Mr. Warpdale, of Portman-square,” replied Charles. And, upon the balance of accounts, I think you will find yourself no loser by the mischief I have done you with Mrs. Froth, if I atone for it by introducing you to Mr. Warpdale.”

“ I am vastly obliged to you for your intended good offices, and I give you joy, with all my heart,” said Pivot, “ upon this great match. For, of course, you know, that Mr. Warpdale’s property in Yorkshire is nearly twenty thousand a-year. At least, so I am told by a relation of mine, who happens to rent a large farm belonging to that gentleman. Charles then took out of his pocket fifty pounds for the widow, and likewise gave Pivot a note to pay his taylor’s bill; when shortly afterwards the attorney left the room, full of gratitude for Charles’s kind promises to him, and not a little ashamed of himself for having so played the fool, as to make a merit of introducing him to company, which he now saw must have been secretly despised by Charles,

for

for its vulgar and contemptible affectations and absurdities.

Pivot had not been long gone, before Warpdale entered, to request that Charles and his sister would accompany him to his house to give their opinion on a picture which he had lately purchased. On passing through the hall, a person bowed to Warpdale, whom Charles immediately recognized to be his taylor. On mentioning this circumstance to Warpdale, as they went up stairs, he immediately rang the bell, and desired Mr. Cape to be sent to him. "I am sorry you have it out of my power," said Mr. Warpdale, as Cape entered, "to recommend or employ you any longer; but your behavior to this gentleman is unpardonable."

"I am truly sorry for it," replied Cape; "and believe me, Sir, I should never have acted as I did, if I had not been worked on by the stories that I heard from Mr. Featherweight's servant." "You will instantly obtain my forgiveness," said Charles, "and likewise

likewise that of Mr. Warpdale, if you faithfully tell me what those stories were."

As the taylor felt only the force of one motive in this business, individual interest, he hesitated not a moment to inform them, of the vile expedient which Mr. Featherweight, through the means of his servant, had adopted to incite him to demand his money; since ten such customers as Mr. Featherweight could not repay him for the loss of one like Warpdale. At the detection of an act so mean and base, a less fiery disposition than Charles's might have well been moved to the highest pitch of indignation. It was however a gratifying reflection to him, when he had attained sufficient composure of mind to reflect upon the subject, that this infamous attempt on the part of Featherweight, to plunge him in the deepest distress, was occasioned by regarding him as his successful rival with Lady Emily. Completely then as Charles considered Featherweight's conduct as characteristic of a villain, yet as it exhibited to
him

him such incontestible proof at the same time of his being so dear to her Ladyship, for some of his bitterest sighs were heaved at the thoughts of being no longer remembered by her, he ceased to harbour such deadly resentment against his unprincipled competitor.

A week had now imperceptibly glided away in domestic happiness, and in frequenting of public amusements, where Miss Beauford appeared in all the elegance of dress which the fortune and taste of her intended husband required, when, one evening after Charles, his sister and Warpdale had been taking a family dinner with a relation of the latter, it was proposed that they should go to the Opera to hear the new singer. As Warpdale had at that time no box, they were obliged to go into the pit. In the course of the third act, the new performer sang an air in so exquisite a style as to call forth the repeated plaudits of the whole audience. The instant it was finished, Charles and Warpdale looked at Louisa in the full expectation of hearing her

her break out into raptures at her performance, as she had not long before been expressing to them both the great pleasure with which she had listened to her strains; when, to their mutual astonishment, she confessed that she had not heard any thing which passed on the stage for the last ten minutes. Being rallied for her want of taste by her brother, "I plead guilty," said she, "to the charge, but the fact is, my attention has been entirely absorbed in the contemplation of the most lovely woman that I ever beheld, but whose countenance is marked with such deep abstracted melancholy, that I am confident she has been as indifferent to the music, singing, and this superb spectacle, ever since her entrance, as I have for the last ten minutes. And her figure, now she stands up, is as captivating as her face. Is she not, Charles, a beautiful creature?" Here Miss Beauford looked towards a young Lady who was in the front seat of a lower box, at no great distance from them.

On turning to her brother for his opinion,
the

the extraordinary change which she saw his features at that moment undergo, as clearly convinced her, that the fascinating stranger was Lady Emily Clairville, as if he had said so an hundred times. This discovery caused Miss Beauford to rivet her eyes again upon Lady Emily. Her earnest gaze at last caught the notice of her Ladyship, who unconsciously turned pale, and after looking for a moment another way, whispered something to an elderly Lady standing by her side, who immediately fixed her eyes upon Miss Beauford. While this dumb scene was going on, Charles, the better to conceal his agitated and flushed face, which this unexpected sight of Lady Emily had occasioned, sunk into the seat whence he had just arisen. As soon, however, as he felt he could command his emotions, he got up, when, in that very moment, the fine blue eyes of Lady Emily met his. She turned as white as alabaster, and presently afterward casting upon him a smile of tenderness and sorrow, left the box. At this unequivocal

vocal

vocal mark of her attachment, the manly heart of Charles was quite overpowered. In a low and tremulous voice, he whispered to his sister, that he was unwell, and immediately hurried home to his lodgings, and soon retired to his chamber, where he passed the night in resigning his thoughts to a passion, which, in less happier moments, he had done his utmost to suppress.

The clock had not struck eight the next morning, before Mr. Wormer was in Charles's bed-room. "I shall make no apology for this intrusion," said the worthy man as he entered, "since I have the happiness to tell you that your uncle is arrived in England."

"Oh, gracious Providence," exclaimed Charles, clasping his hands together, "I humbly thank thee for these glad tidings. But when, where, and how did you learn a piece of news which fills me with such inexpressible happiness?"

"You shall hear all," replied Wormer; "but you know, as I am methodical in all I do,

do, I must begin at the beginning of my story. Taking up an evening paper yesterday, to see if a work was announced, of which I am the publisher, the first thing that I read at the head of the column was the following advertisement.—If the gentleman who made such frequent inquiries a month ago at Mr. Ledger's banking house, respecting the fate of his uncle, will call there again, he may obtain the most satisfactory intelligence concerning him.—Eager to be the messenger of so unlooked-for and so joyful an event, I went immediately to the head clerk's house, with whom I have some slight acquaintance. Unluckily he was gone to Turnham Green, and not expected home till seven this morning. I was with him accordingly at that time, and from him I learnt that your uncle is now at the seat of Lord Lyndhurst in Hampshire, where he has been for this week past, in the deepest distress of mind, at not being unable to obtain any account of yourself or Miss Beauford."

At these last words, Charles hurried down
stairs

stairs into the parlour, where he found his sister conversing with Warpdale, who, at that early hour, came to enquire after his friend's health, conceiving that he had left the Opera from bodily indisposition. "Prepare yourself, my dear Louisa," said Charles, "for the additional happiness which is in store for you—our dear uncle is in England." Then turning to Warpdale, who felt the most agreeable sensation at this intelligence, while it almost overpowered the sensibility of Louisa, "How rejoiced shall I be," continued he "to introduce my uncle to the man whose generous friendship has saved me from coming to the edge of ruin, and how proud will he be to reward it with the hand of my sister. But enough of this;" perceiving that Warpdale was pained at his observation,—"Go now, Louisa, and order your maid to make immediate preparations for your journey, for, in a few hours, I hope we shall be on our road to Hampshire."

At one o'clock, Warpdale's travelling carriage was at the door, and about ten at night
they

they had reached Southampton, where Warpdale stopped, while Charles and his sister proceeded on to Lord Lyndhurst's seat, which was only five miles distant from that beautiful town. Mr. Colebrooke was just retiring to his chamber, when he heard a loud ringing at the porter's gate ; and while he was wondering who could be the visitors at so late an hour, the door opened, and Charles and Louisa rushed into his arms.

As soon as Mr. Colebrooke could speak ; for he wept like a child, while he strained them to his heart, he at length said, " Aware that you both must need repose after your journey, and certain that you will not find it until I have explained the cause of my long and seemingly mysterious silence, I will therefore give you an immediate account of the extraordinary circumstances which have lately befallen me. You may remember that in my last letter to you from Bourdeaux, I held out strong hopes of returning soon to England ; for, in point of stamina, I had gained a new constitution by the change of climate

climate. When one morning, as I was busied in getting ready for my departure, a French merchant entered my apartments, who had been under considerable obligations to me for services formerly rendered to him in London, and after locking the door, and enquiring if any one was within hearing, he then told me, that if another morning rose upon me in Bourdeaux, my life would pay the penalty of such delay."

"After I had in some degree recovered from the shock into which his speech had thrown me, my friend proceeded to say that by the orders of his government, a general *arrêt* of all the English at Bourdeaux he knew was immediately to take place; and that myself, and constant companion Mr. Smith, of whom you shall hear more presently, were devoted to inevitable destruction, in consequence of the indiscreet freedom with which we had censured certain oppressive acts of the despotic Ruler of France, and which, by the spies who infest the *table-d'hotes*, had been reported to the
Minister

Minister of Police. To avert this impending danger, my friend proposed to put me on board a vessel of his that luckily was to sail in a few hours to St. Domingo. I, of course, thankfully embraced his offer, and requested at the same time his kind offices in apprising Mr. Smith of his critical situation, and of affording him similar means of escape. He did so, and before evening came on, we had the satisfaction of losing sight of Bourdeaux. We arrived in safety at St. Domingo, and the week afterward we sailed for New York, from which place I informed you of my hair-breadth escape, and stated my purpose to return by the first conveyance to England. For, as to addressing you previous to my departure from Bourdeaux, the thing was utterly impossible had I been assured the letter would have reached your hands, since every moment that I staid was at the hazard of my life. I had only time to put up the few valuables that I possessed before I was conveyed to the vessel of its friendly owner. At New York, however,

Mr.

Mr. Smith was attacked with a violent fever. This circumstance, while it was the subject of sincerest grief to me, was also the cause of preventing my immediate embarkation for England. For had not my acquaintance with him been now ripening into friendship, I should never have forgiven myself could I have left him in the state he then was, to the mercy of strangers. The moment that he could with safety undertake the voyage, we set sail for England, and almost the first intelligence that I learnt on my arrival, was, that the two ships, by which I had sent letters to acquaint you of the foregoing particulars, were unfortunately lost."

" I will not distress your affectionate and feeling hearts, by recounting all that I have suffered since my return to England. Waving all such relation, I shall proceed to say, that on the day I reached Liverpool, I dispatched to you a letter in which I desired that you would direct your answer to me at my banker's, where I should be in the course of a few days. This letter I addressed to you

at

at Lord Altamont's house in town, judging it would find you there at this season of the year. You can therefore conceive my astonishment, when that letter was returned to my banker's, with this laconic note. " Dr. Glebmore informs Mr. Colebrooke, that Mr. Beauford has been dismissed some months from the situation which he held under Earl Altamont, since which, Mr. Beauford's intercourse with his Lordship's family has entirely ceased."

" While I was musing on the contents of this note, the post came in ; and brought me a letter from Mrs. Eaglehurst, in which, after congratulating me on my safe arrival in England, she coolly told me that you had removed your sister from her protection some time ago, and from that period she had neither seen nor heard any thing of you nor your sister. This letter was in answer to the one I had addressed to Louisa at Mrs. Eaglehurst's house, at the same time that I wrote to you from Liverpool. If my astonishment was great at the contents of these letters, it was

infinitely greater at the conduct of Mr. Ledger towards you, for though I had been guilty of a culpable omission, yet a less contriving head than his, might have found the means of preventing you from suffering by it."

"I am afraid, my dear uncle," said Charles, "that some part of your censure must rest upon me in this business. For, perhaps, I ought to have reflected, that I had no right to expect that to be given me, for which I was too proud to solicit."

"I trust," replied Mr. Colebrook, "that Mr. Ledger is able to make this excuse for letting you and your sister be tossed about like tennis balls, the sport of a wayward fortune; since that I concluded had been your fate, when I found that I had to deplore the loss of Mr. Aimworth. For, when I learnt from Mr. Ledger, that you had ceased your enquiries about me for the last month, I set off immediately for Oxford, in the hopes of meeting Mr. Aimworth there, and of obtaining your address from him. It

was

was upon my return, that I caused the advertisement to be inserted, which I suppose has been the happy means of conducting you both to the house of Lord Lyndhurst, who, under the name of Smith, I first met at Bourdeaux, and for whom I entertain that firm friendship which death alone dissolves."

" His Lordship's story is as follows.— Sick of the world, hateful to himself by his follies, and almost a bankrupt in fortune through his inordinate passion for gaming, he retired to the Continent about twelve years ago, to retrieve his immense losses by a rigid system of œconomy. And well knowing that a title was peculiarly detrimental to the plan of life which he proposed for himself; he therefore became Mr. Smith, and resolved to keep that name, until he had restored the squandered fortunes of a noble house. At Geneva he first tasted of domestic happiness;—he married the orphan daughter of a clergyman at that place. She was as accomplished as beautiful; and from her he first derived a

taste for reading, which now constitutes one of the chief pleasures of his life. Six happy years passed over his head, when his beloved wife died in child-bed of her second son. Incapable of continuing any longer in a place which daily reminded him of the inestimable treasure that he had lost, he set off with his only child to Boulogne, and from thence sent him over to England by a trusty servant to the care and protection of an old maiden aunt. His Lordship is now gone to bring his boy home, while he has left me here to wait the result of the advertisement; and so cordially has he sympathised with me in all my afflictions and disappointments, that I verily believe the joy which I now feel, will not be greater than his, when he is told of your arrival.

“ Having now satisfied your curiosity, I expect to receive a full and faithful account of all the circumstances which have befallen you since our separation. But, before you begin, I must insist that my dear Louisa retires to her chamber, for I am sure she
must

must stand in need of rest, after the fatigues of her journey." Upon which Mr. Colebrooke rang the bell for the housekeeper, who immediately came, and after bringing Miss Beauford some refreshments, conducted her to a sleeping apartment.

Charles then commenced a copious and minute narrative of all his feelings and adventures, excepting only his late interview with Earl Altamont, since he and his uncle had parted; and when he came to the conclusion of his story, which our readers may easily imagine did not require to be heightened by any colouring of eloquence to excite a deep interest in his auditor, Mr. Colebrooke said, " I am going perhaps to forfeit my claims to that accuracy of judgment which you were accustomed to give me, by telling you that I am more moved with indignation at Mrs. Eaglehurst's base and artful desertion of Louisa, than I am at Earl Altamont's meanness and duplicity. For, the injustice which he has done you, may be palliated on the score of pride and prejudice, the springs by
which

which so many of the great are chiefly actuated. You had formed, as he thought, a premeditated plan of ensnaring the affections of his daughter. No wonder then, after he had once got that notion into his head, that he began to hate you with a deadly hate; and to think it a virtue, rather than a crime, to evade the fulfilment of his promise. Now Mrs. Eaglehurst has been guilty of a great cruelty, without being able to fly to sanctuary, or pretend to any cause of resentment against Louisa. But the noble behavior of your friend Mr. Warpdale, whom I am impatient to embrace, will amply atone for all her sufferings. Nor is the evil which the Earl has committed irremediable, since, singular enough to relate, the day before Lyndhurst left me, he received an account of the death of a cousin, who sat for the only close borough which belongs to him, and as he is no stranger to the variety of your powers, and the extent of your ambition, (for I have talked with his Lordship for hours about you) he was kind enough to tell me
that

that he should keep the seat vacant to the last moment, in the hopes of having you to fill it. And, now too, that I find how steadily you have persevered in the course of virtue, it is rather a matter of rejoicing to me than of regret, to know that you have drank of the bitter waters of poverty ; for, in the words of my favorite Poet, I may say,

“ So many great
Illustrious spirits have conversed with woe,
Have in her school been taught, as are enough
To consecrate distress, and make ambition
Ev’n with the frown beyond the smile of fortune.”

“ But we will terminate this interesting conversation, my dear Charles, for it is long past midnight ; and, as I wish you to be with your friend early enough to-morrow to bring him over to breakfast, I must recommend you to go to bed immediately.”

The happy uncle and nephew then retired to their respective chambers, and before nine the next morning, the latter was with Warpdale to accompany him to Lyndhurst Priory.

In

In their ride thither, Charles related to Warpdale all the particulars of his uncle's story, and ended by telling him, how eager he was to be known to him.

Shortly after Charles had introduced Warpdale, and while the happy party were seated round the breakfast table, a servant entered and brought Mr. Colebrooke a letter from Lord Lyndhurst, in which he expressed his intention of returning home that day to dinner, a piece of news which added very sensibly to their happiness. His Lordship's reception of his visitors was such as bespoke at once the man of good breeding, and the warm-hearted friend. In the course of the evening, Warpdale took an opportunity of expressing his earnest hopes to Mr. Colebrooke, that he would present him with his niece's hand at the end of the week, as that was the time appointed, with her consent, for their marriage. I should be as blind to your merits, as deficient in gratitude," said Mr. Colebrooke, "not to acknowledge that I shall perform that office with the utmost pride

pride and pleasure. But, I must have my way in one thing. The thousand pounds which you have so handsomely advanced to Charles, I shall insist on repaying to you."

"I can accept it on no other terms," replied the generous Warpdale, "but on your promise to settle all that you may possess exclusively on your nephew. For, at my request Louisa intends, as a trifling mark of her grateful attachment to him, to present him, on the day which makes me the happiest of men, a paper which assigns over to him the portion left her by her mother."

"Well, my dear Sir," said Mr. Colebrooke, "I shall not oppose a design which I perceive you have set your heart upon; especially as I understand your estate to be as great, as I can testify the generosity of your mind is abundant."

According then to the time appointed, the marriage of Warpdale and Louisa was solemnized in Lord Lyndhurst's chapel; and, after the ceremony, the delighted Warpdale and his lovely bride, set off for Yorkshire.—

Charles

Charles, his uncle, and their noble friend, accompanied them as far as Oxford, where, after taking a most affectionate leave of them, they turned off to Dorner, the name of the borough which Charles was to represent, and directly after his election, proceeded on to the metropolis.

CHAP. XXVII.



Methinks the punishment most just.

MASSINGER.



Our readers may remember that we left Lady Emily in a sort of feverish anxiety respecting the pecuniary circumstances of Charles, and intent upon devising some scheme to improve them. For this purpose, her maid was instructed to repair to the place where she had before met Charles, and to endeavour to learn from him his exact situation. Day after day did Mary take her walk to the Park, and, with anxious eagerness, look round for him, and return with a
heavy

heavy heart to inform her mistress of the ill success of her errand. With strictest propriety, therefore, might Oswald have called Altamont House the abode of sorrow and misery, while Lady Emily was in such a state of uncertainty, doubt, and terror, as to the fate of him who, she felt, after his last interview with Mary, had more power than ever over her heart. A strong ray of hope and comfort broke in upon the gloom of her despair, on beholding Charles so unexpectedly at the Opera with his sister, (for she immediately concluded it must have been her, from the resemblance which she bore to him,) since her Ladyship's desponding fancy had figured them to have reached that degree of poverty which their joint efforts could not overcome; and when afterwards she heard that Miss Beauford was the wife of the rich Mr. Warpdale of Yorkshire, she confidently anticipated the time when Charles would rise to eminence, in opposition to all the obstacles which her father's injustice had placed in his way.

One

One morning, while this thought had taken such firm possession of her mind, that she was almost insensible to her aunt's having been in the room for some time, Mr. Eaglehurst's name was announced. "I shall become a solicitor for your company," said Lady Meeresfield, as he entered, "if you bring with it always that cheerful and good-humoured smile which is now so visible in your face; indeed, any society will soon be welcome to me, if Emily should take to indulge in these *brown studies*, or fits of abstraction, as they are more politely termed: Would you believe it, that I have been half an hour in this room, without hearing from her any other words than such insipid monosyllables as these, yes aunt, and no aunt."

"I'll wager a good sum," said Oswald, casting an arch look upon Lady Meeresfield at the same time, "that I make your niece utter presently something more than monosyllables, even if she had resolved to observe a pythagorean period of silence. You said
just

just now, that my countenance was expressive of happiness. I am sure it ought to be so, for, next to the satisfaction that I receive in the triumph of a noble fellow, I am best pleased with the confusion of a dissembling villain. I left you last night not a little annoyed at the request which my Lord had made to me a few minutes before dinner, to vote on a question which one of his new colleagues was to bring before the House that evening. For could any thing be more vexatious to a man of my taste, than to be obliged to exchange the bewitching gaieties of a ball for a close room, where one was in danger of being almost stifled by the heated respiration of I don't know how many hundred factious politicians. Well, after I had nearly fallen asleep from the dull nonsense of several speakers, 'uprose Featherweight, and when he had delivered a speech "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," several old members then caught the speaker's eye, as the phrase is, but they all gave way to a young man who had risen at the same time,

and

and never was such courtesy, I'll venture to say, better shewn than on the present occasion. His appearance immediately interested me, and before he had finished a dozen sentences, the expectations of the whole House were raised for a brilliant harangue. Nor were they in the least disappointed. For, perfect master of his subject, there was nothing perplexed, nothing insipid, and when he came to pursue Featherweight through the mazes of his argument, and to expose the flimsiness of it, if ever that person wished himself out of the House, I am sure it must have been then. Since the more Featherweight winced and looked aghast, the more the young orator hunted every particular expression of his with the keenness of a bloodhound,—the more he exercised his wit upon him, and powers of ridicule; whilst, at the conclusion of his speech, where the point of discussion admitted of it, he reached the highest pitch of impassioned eloquence. As soon as he had sat down, the House rung with loud and repeated cries of *hear him, hear him*, which
you

you are to understand, ladies, is tantamount to saying *bravo, bravo*; when an old fellow who sat on the bench below me, and who is called the Nestor of the House, declared that he had not heard so fine a maiden speech for these ten years. And pray now, who do you think this extraordinary young man was?" looking significantly at Lady Emily.

"Who else could it be," exclaimed Lady Emily, with a transport of joy, which she in vain struggled to conceal, "but your inestimable friend, Beauford."

"I sincerely rejoice," said Lady Meeresfield, "that a second opportunity has been given you of becoming the herald of Beauford's praises."

"Did I not predict to you a hundred times, my dear aunt," said Lady Emily, while the glow of exultation was suffused over her beautiful face, "that if ever any opening was given to Beauford, he would distinguish himself; and am not I then a true prophet?"

"I have not yet come," said Oswald, "to
the

the catastrophe of my story, which, I think, is so striking, that if any of our dramatists got hold of it, I am sure they would contrive to hitch it into one of their new comedies."

"Pray let us have it then," cried Lady Meeresfield.

"Why the moment Beauford had finished," replied Oswald, "up got a ministerial member, who, as the the bill under debate was pretty well understood to have originated with your brother, took that occasion of launching out into some very severe remarks upon his recent political apostacy, as he called it; and not content with doing so, he ventured to throw out certain insinuations against his conduct in a late transaction, which went to impeach his honour and veracity as a gentleman. A loud cry of *order, order*, hereupon took place, when the mover of the bill looked to Featherweight, in the full expectation that he would rise and vindicate his Lordship from the aspersions thus injuriously cast upon him, rightly con-

ceiving that, as he so particularly enjoyed his Lordship's confidence, no one was so competent as he to perform that friendly office. But to his astonishment, and to that of all those who belonged to his party, Featherweight made no reply, so utterly confounded was he on seeing Beauford rise to speak, for he looked for him rather to have been in the back settlements of America, than in the place where he was. The consequence of which silence on the part of Featherweight, would have infallibly been, that the whole House must have set it down as the effect and proof of conscious guilt in his Lordship, if Beauford had not again risen and said, that considering the honorable gentleman's known intimacy with the noble Earl so pointedly alluded to by the last speaker, it was a matter of great astonishment to him, that he could silently asquiesce, under the weight of such serious, direct, and circumstantial imputations, as had that night been made against his noble friend, especially as he well knew that they might be so easily refuted.

It

It appeared, therefore, to him, that the honorable gentleman's taciturnity would have been more commendable in the beginning of the debate, than at the present moment. Luckily, however, the House, no more than the noble Lord himself, would be sufferers by it. For it so happened, that he held the situation of private secretary to his Lordship at the very time the ignominious transaction was said to have taken place ; and he should despise himself if he did not stand up in his place and declare, that the charges levelled against the noble person were as unfounded as they were illiberal. Beauford then entered into an explicit statement of the affair alluded to, and satisfactorily proved to both sides of the House, that his Lordship's hands were quite pure in it."

" Generous Charles," mentally exclaimed Lady Emily, " surely my father will not be insensible to this exalted generosity of conduct."

" Did Mr. Featherweight," said Lady Meeresfield, " attempt to say nothing in de-

fence of my brother; after this explanation of Beauford's?"

"Yes," replied Oswald, "but he spoke in so incoherent a manner, that I defy any one to have understood what he meant, and before he had been on his legs five minutes, he became so confused, that he was obliged to sit down."

"Pray can you inform me," rejoined Lady Meeresfield, "who gave Beauford a seat in Parliament?"

"Lord Lyndhurst; whom, you may have heard, has been long absent on the Continent," replied Oswald. "From a wild dissipated character, he is grown a philosopher, as I shall be, when I attain his age, which cannot be under fifty. Beauford's uncle met him abroad, and as he is also a philosopher, they naturally enough became intimate friends."

"Did you not see Beauford after the debate was over?" said Lady Emily.

"O yes," replied Oswald, "we supped together at two this morning, for the House
did

did not divide till one ; and when I congratulated him on the successful *debut* which he had made as a speaker, he answered, “ I will candidly confess to you, that it was not the desire of fame alone, although I am by no means insensible to the glory of a great name, which worked me up to address the House almost on the very day I had taken my seat. No,—I was prompted to the effort you witnessed by far more selfish motives ; which perhaps, upon reflexion, I ought to condemn as hostile to the spirit of those laws which enjoin, on every man, who is neither afraid nor ashamed of bowing to their authority, the forgiveness of his enemy. You perceived the exertions I made to overthrow the arguments of Featherweight, and to paint them in the strongest colours of ridicule. That man has strained his utmost nerve to depress and vilify the slender merit I possess ; and, not satisfied with endeavouring to destroy my reputation, he has laboured with all his might to throw me into prison. Had

he not then so acted, I fear that I should not have so spoken."

While Oswald was continuing his praises of Charles, a servant entered with the newspapers. "Oh now," said he, taking one into his hand, "we shall have the report of Beauford's speech. Come, they have done him tolerable justice as to the length, for I see it occupies two columns. Well, Lady Meeresfield, as I flatter myself I am by no means an indifferent reader, I will now do that for your amusement, which, I may safely say, I shall never do again—read out a parliamentary speech from beginning to end. Though by the bye," assuming as serious a countenance as he could, "I ought to make my apology to Lady Emily for this intrusion on her patience, as I remember to have caught her yawning over a speech of one of our most celebrated orators. I shall not, therefore, be very much affronted, if she should fall asleep in the middle of this first essay of a candidate for public fame."

Oswald

Oswald then seated himself, and, after a few preparatory hems, read as follows ;—

“ SIR—Upon a motion of such vital importance to the honor, interests, and happiness of my country, as that which has been this night submitted to your consideration by the learned gentleman opposite, I trust that I shall not improperly trespass upon the indulgence of the House, young as I am in its business, if I venture to deliver my sentiments at some length. For I should be ashamed, Sir, to meet my constituents without having declared my opinion in the best manner I could, upon a subject so deeply involving——” Here Oswald was stopped from proceeding any further, by a loud outcry in the adjoining apartment, for Lady Emily and her aunt; and while their astonished eyes were turned to each other at this unexpected interruption, Dr. Glebmore came to them with a countenance that bespoke some dreadful news, and said, “ my Lord has just burst a blood-vessel.” The suddenness of this shock was too great for
Lady

Lady Emily, and she fainted. Lady Meeresfield, though inexpressibly agitated at this intelligence, yet retained sufficient composure of mind to enquire if medical attendance had been sent for, and learning that her wishes had been anticipated in that respect, she, after committing Lady Emily to the care of Oswald, hurried instantly to her brother's room.

CHAP. XXVIII.



For you the plainest is the simplest rule,
A cunning woman is a knavish fool.

LYTTELTON.



As soon as Lady Emily came to herself, and Oswald could with any propriety leave the house, he hastened away to his own lodgings; for he had business at that time of his own to carry into execution, the importance of which demanded his whole attention. With several good qualities, this gentleman had, as we observed before, a superabundance of vanity. The woman, therefore, who professed to admire him, however disagreeable

disagreeable she might be to others, was sure to stand high in his good graces ; and if she went the length of thinking none equal to him, she might safely reckon, whether old or ugly, upon meeting in all parties his due observances, attentions, and respect. This Miss Martman did in the most undisguised manner, after she had lost all hopes of gaining Charles for a lover. A wife with a reputed fortune of sixty thousand pounds, was a very convenient personage to Oswald at this period ; and thinking as many others have done before, that a few lucky throws of the dice might shorten a long period of œconomy, he again sought the gaming table, which he did not quit without losing a sum that might have made a poor family happy for life, he therefore seriously turned his thoughts to the marrying of Miss Martman, especially as he fancied that she was like a piece of soft wax, which could be formed to any shape that he pleased.

Oswald soon became “ a thriving wooer ;” but, as the Lady had taken it into her head,

that

that the world would not think it a love-match, unless they paid a visit to Gretna Green, he of course offered no objections to the hymeneal torch being lighted at that place. Accordingly, the next day after Lord Altamont's alarming accident had happened, they were on their road to Scotland. At Stilton, Oswald found time to address a few lines to his mother, to inform her of his destination with the charming Miss Martman, for the land of connubial happiness, and to beg that she would contrive to let him have her blessings and congratulations in town, where he should return with all possible speed. This letter, owing to the negligence of the person to whom Oswald had intrusted it, Mrs. Eaglehurst did not receive until a fortnight after it was written. The first intelligence that she had of her son's matrimonial trip, was through the medium of the newspapers, and in the following manner.—

“ It is generally reported in the fashionable circles, that a great heiress has lately gone off to Gretna Green, with the dashing Mr. Eaglehurst.”

Eaglehurst." Immediately under which paragraph it was stated, that Earl Altamont had burst a blood vessel, and that his life was in imminent danger.

Now, as Mrs. Eaglehurst was ever ready to believe what she wished to happen, the accident mentioned in the last paragraph was attributed by her directly, to the elopement of Lady Emily with her son. Indeed, from the expression of a great heiress, it would have been rather surprising if Mrs. Eaglehurst had not settled it in her mind, that the fair fugitive was no other than Lady Emily, having left Beechwood Court, as our readers may remember she did, under the full impression of Oswald's attentions to her Ladyship, being crowned with complete success.

To London then this deluded woman hurried, indulging her imagination all the way in what Addison in one of his Spectators calls *Castle-building*; and by the time she had got in sight of Altamont gates, she was so completely under the influence of that
mental

mental disease, that she had killed his Lordship, invested her son with his titles and wealth, and moreover placed him in situations of varied splendor and greatness. With a heart full of joy, though with a countenance of ostentatious sorrow, she made her enquiries of the groom of the chambers, after his Lordship's health, as she passed through the Hall to Lady Meeresfield's apartments. At the top of the stair-case, which led to them, she was met by her Ladyship's woman, when, after hearing from her that the Earl had passed a very good night, and was pronounced to be in a fair way of recovery by his physicians, she desired to see Lady Meeresfield, carefully avoiding even the mention of Lady Emily's name, both from motives of policy as well as of propriety.

Lady Meeresfield was in her brother's dressing room reading to him, when this new visitor was introduced. "Alas, my Lord," cried Mrs. Eaglehurst, with an appearance of the deepest sorrow, as she advanced towards him, though in a hurried tone, for she felt
her

her boasted courage forsake her on encountering his eyes, "how shall I express to you what I feel on the present occasion. My happiness, indeed, would know no bounds at seeing you look so well after your alarming illness, if it were not damped by the conduct of Oswald, who, before I pardon it, shall first, in the presence of your Lordship, confess that I ——"

"Come, come, my dear cousin Eaglehurst," said the Earl, good-naturedly interrupting her, "we must forget and forgive. Oswald certainly has taken a step which I did not expect he would have done.—But his fault must not be set down as unpardonable. Do you, sister, intercede for him."

"That I will, with the greatest pleasure," replied Lady Meeresfield; — "And if I should fail in my intreaty for his forgiveness, Mrs. Eaglehurst's favorite will soon be here to complete what I may leave unfinished."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Eaglehurst in a
most

most gracious tone of voice, “ as *you both* are inclined to consider Oswald’s transgression as venial, it would neither be acting the part of a Christian nor a mother, to continue implacable in my resentment towards him.” These words were scarcely uttered, before the door opened, and Lady Emily entered. Had Mrs. Eaglehurst beheld a spectre, she could not have been more terrified or amazed, than she was at this unexpected sight of her Ladyship.

“ You have come just in time, Emily,” said her father, quite unconscious of the sudden confusion which had taken place in Mrs. Eaglehurst’s looks, as her face was turned from him, “ to hear your friend pronounce the pardon of Oswald.”

“ I shall be most happy to hear it,” replied Lady Emily, “ and I am sure my dear father will leave nothing undone on his part to reconcile Sir Christopher to the match.”

“ Sir Christopher, who ! ” ——— exclaimed
Mrs.

Mrs. Eaglehurst, sinking into a chair that was near her.

“ Why Sir Christopher Martman,” replied her Ladyship, “ the father of Oswald’s bride, whom else do you suppose, my dear Madam, I am speaking of?”

“ O give me patience, Heaven!” cried Mrs. Eaglehurst, “ to bear my disappointment.—What then, has my son been so deaf to the voice of common sense, as to marry a rustic home-bred flirt, who, in less than six months, will be the disgust of her husband, and the laughing-stock of all the fashionable ladies of her acquaintance? When I too had fondly hoped, that he had touched the heart of——”

“ Who!” eagerly said Lady Meeresfield, in the expectation of hearing something fall from her lips, in this burst of inconsideration, which would at once betray her real character to the Earl, since she saw what passed in her mind about Lady Emily, just as clearly as if Mrs. Eaglehurst had told it her in words.

Now

Now whether Mrs. Eaglehurst saw the drift of this question, and was too cunning to be the dupe of it, or whether by an instinctive bias of prudence, which influenced her on all occasions, most certain it was, that very contrary to the wishes and intentions of Lady Meeresfield, she made no reply, but under the pretence of not disturbing his Lordship by her griefs, she immediately withdrew to her apartment. Agonizing were those feelings of the mind which she carried thither, since, of all torments, self reproach is indubitably the most dreadful, and which she was destined to endure in its fullest force. For now, that her speculations had not turned out, as she confidently predicted they would, all her mean despicable and wicked deviations from rectitude, and her shameful conduct to Charles, his sister, and uncle, came full into view, making her feel the pungency of self-abhorrence and remorse ; and though she tried several times to be at peace with herself, by endeavour-

ing to think, that half mankind would have acted as she had done in a similar situation, yet she soon discovered the inadequacy of that stale expedient, to administer quiet to the sharp throbs of conscience.

Early therefore the next morning, under the plea of avoiding an interview with her son and his bride, but in reality to escape from the sight of persons, who so forcibly reminded her of the artifices she had practiced towards them, as vain, as they now appeared to her despicable, this miserable disappointed woman, with a heart quite burdened with the consciousness of her wickedness, set off for Cheshire. Two days after her departure, the new married couple arrived in London. Nor was it long before they were reconciled to Sir Christopher and Lady Martman, through the mediation of the Earl; since, luckily for Oswald, they had minds which could easily sink into acquiescence, and could discover the same action to be irreproachable, which had just before

before excited their severest condemnation, if they found it to be sanctioned by the countenance and support of a great man like his Lordship.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE CONCLUSION.

WE shall not affront the penetration of our readers by telling them, that a blood vessel giving way in Lord Altamont, was produced from the sudden violence of his rage and indignation at Featherweight's cowardice and baseness, in suffering the outrageous attack made upon him in the House of Commons, to pass without contradiction. A new train of thoughts, however, had arisen to him in this illness; for unavoidably left to many hours of solitary meditation,

dition, in consequence of the strictest injunctions of his physicians, that he should be disturbed by no questions for the first four days after his attack. He was thus compelled, as it were, to enter into a serious and impartial retrospect of his own conduct. Things were then seen by his Lordship for the first time in their proper form. Wealth, honors, and power, were no longer appreciated above their true value ; while there were moments, when he could cordially admire the manliness, generosity, and fine propriety of Charles's conduct ;—may even seriously think of rewarding his virtues and talents with the hand of his daughter. For, whenever he placed himself in his situation, which the turn his reflections had taken, led him frequently to do, and reviewed the whole of his conduct to himself and his daughter, it could not but extort from him the confession, that he was in every way deserving of her. Whereas, he saw no ground for indulging in the sentiments of self-satisfaction, when he looked into himself ; but much for humility, regret,

regret, and repentance. The affectionate tenderness and unremitting attention likewise shewn him by his daughter, under the languor of weakness, and the occasional solicitude of falling into an incurable disease, (an idea of inexpressible horror to his Lordship,) touched him excessively, and helped not a little to fix his eyes on Charles's various excellencies, and to dispose him to give what he well knew would be to his daughter the first of earthly blessings,——his consent to their union.

It is more than probable, however, that the Earl's favorable sentiments to Charles would have been but of short continuance, after his restoration to his former vigor of health, and mingled life of pleasure and business, if the leader of his party had not called upon him during his confinement, and expressed his surprise and regret at his withdrawing, under any circumstances, his patronage from a young man, who, by the extraordinary specimen of oratory which he delivered in the House, had already lifted himself

himself up to the notice and observation of the public, and who would, in all probability, become one of the future ministers of his country. An opinion so decided as this, and coming from a person of so high an authority, at once determined the Earl to unite his daughter to the man who was the first and last object in her heart. For, as ambition was the ruling passion of his Lordship, and to which all other feelings were only considered as auxiliary to its great object, he perceived directly, the great advantages which would result to his political views and interests from binding to himself, in a close and inseparable connection, a young man whose merits had already placed him on an eminence that would justify his aspiring to the hand of his daughter, and who, from motives of gratitude alone, independent of every other consideration, would powerfully concur in enabling him to sustain his own reputation in all its former height and splendor.

Having once therefore adopted this opinion,

he was as impatient to see their union, as he was before hostile to it. But though his Lordship had now set his heart upon the match speedily taking place, yet he could do nothing without a manœuvre or stratagem ; instead therefore of having the nobleness of mind to send for Charles, and to tell him candidly he was proud to offer his daughter's hand to a young man of his genius and virtue, he carelessly said to Oswald, shortly after his return from Scotland, " I am told that I am infinitely indebted to your friend, Mr. Beauford, for the liberal manner in which he vindicated my character in the House, when Turnwell made his motion. If you think the breach between us reparable, I shall be happy to see Mr. Beauford next Saturday to my political dinner."

" Oh," replied Oswald, eagerly catching at this unexpected opening for Charles's renewal of his intimacy with Lady Emily, which he had told him the day before would not be until he became Prime Minister, or at least Secretary of State, " I can undertake
to

to say, my Lord, on the part of Beauford, that he as much laments the separation, as it is possible for you to do."

"Well, then," replied the Earl, "upon the strength of your assertions, I shall order a card of invitation to be sent to him, and shall of course expect to see you do a violence to your own inclination, which dislikes I know, this sort of dinners, and accompany him."

Here the conversation ended, and Oswald took his leave in search of Charles. He found him at Lord Lyndhurst's, busily employed in looking over some Acts of Parliament with Mr. Colebrooke and his Lordship. "By the bye," said Oswald, soon after he was seated, "Do you know, Beauford, that Lord Pensington and Miss Upgrove are shortly to be married?—that Featherweight has accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and is going immediately abroad, and that Dr. Glebmore, despairing of getting a bishopric since Earl Altamont has become an oppositionist, accepted last week a fat college living,

living, which fell vacant about a fortnight ago, and has now entirely cut with his Lordship? But what you will think more wonderful than all these wonderful events put together, is, that I am sent by the aforesaid Peer to hold out the olive branch, and to invite you to dinner next Saturday at Altamont House, upon which occasion I am to officiate as *gentleman usher to your honor*."

"Can this be possible!" involuntarily exclaimed Mr. Colebrooke and Lord Lyndhurst at the same time.

"Tell me, what does it mean?" said Charles, in a tone of voice, which shewed how deeply he was agitated at this unlooked-for intelligence.

"Why, it means," replied Oswald, "that Lord Altamont is going to prove, that he is not without the furniture of ordinary minds—common sense—that he willingly takes those steps which necessity would compel him at last to do—in short, it means, to my poor understanding, that his Lordship intends
this

this invitation to be the prelude of your future visits to his daughter."

News so sudden and unexpected, it may be easily imagined, totally unfitted Charles for pursuing the occupation in which Oswald found him engaged. It raised, indeed, that secret tumult in his soul, and put him in such violent hurry of thought, that he was glad to take the first opportunity of indulging the delightful sensations which now sprung up in his bosom retired from every human eye. For, after a long course of hopes, inquietudes, and fears, he saw, at last, all his golden dreams of happiness on the point of being realized. No wonder then, if true love like his was filled with ten thousand impatiences, till the day arrived for his visit to Altamont House, while his busy fancy painted his reception in the most agreeable colours. Nor was his imagination disappointed. For the Earl welcomed him with affectionate cordiality, and treated him with the most marked distinction.

Equal, therefore, to his expectations,
passed

passed a day, which Charles had thought an age till it arrived. When as he and Oswald had taken their leave of his Lordship, and were on the point of descending the staircase which led to the hall, the former suddenly exclaimed, as if the idea had just struck him, " Did I tell you what a fine allegorical picture Lady Emily has lately finished, of what she calls the triumph of genius? Yonder leads to the room where it is placed. As the ladies are at their Richmond villa to-day, for you know it is contrary to etiquette to be here when these political dinners are given ; I durst say now, that you are in the very mood to be in raptures with this production, and to go home miserable to bed should you not see it. If I am right then, follow me."

Charles quickly obeyed the summons, when Oswald, folding his arm in his, and pushing open a green door, was almost in an instant standing with him before Lady Emily and her aunt. The surprise quite bewildered Charles, and he remained for a moment speechless

speechless and immovable, with his eyes fixed on Lady Emily; while she, completely thrown off her guard by this unlooked-for meeting, rose from her seat, and advanced towards him, with looks which penetrated his very soul; when, before she had taken a few steps, the blood forsook her lovely cheeks, and her trembling frame, overcome by the variety of emotions which then possessed her, staggered, and she would have fallen insensible on the floor, if Charles had not at that instant sprung forwards, and caught her in his arms.

Lady Meeresfield, who had been mute also with astonishment at the sight of Charles, for she no more than her niece had the smallest suspicion of his being that day one of her father's guests, my Lord intending to keep his visit a profound secret from them till the following morning, now said to Charles, as soon as he had replaced his beauteous burden on the sofa, "Emily's nerves have been lately so much shaken by the illness of her father, that I am not the least surprised that the unexpected

expected pleasure of meeting an old friend should have quite overpowered her. I must beg, however, that you will now withdraw, for she will presently regain her composure if left alone with me." Perceiving Charles's reluctance to depart, she added, with a look of intreaty, which carried to him the force of a command, "Go now, and rely upon my assurance of seeing Emily to-morrow." He then resigned her passive hand, and almost lost in a wild perplexity of love and joy, rushed out of the room, while Oswald hurried after him, and as they stepped into the carriage which had just then drawn up to the door, "Upon my soul," exclaimed Oswald, "I would not have played the trick which I have done for a thousand guineas, if I had thought to have witnessed this distressing scene. But really I was curious to see how your woman of fine sentiment would behave on her lover's popping in upon her un-awares, as I had taken it into my head, that you would both make very ridiculous figures."

"So

“ So then,” said Charles, “ you were perfectly aware of their being at home.”

“ To be sure I was,” replied Oswald.

“ Well then,” rejoined he, momentarily displeased at Oswald’s thoughtlessness, “ as you have now satisfied your curiosity, pray don’t try the experiment again, since I have no wish to make myself ridiculous, even to afford entertainment to my best of friends, among which number I shall ever include your name.” Charles then changed the conversation, and soon afterwards Oswald dropped him at his lodgings.

As Charles was the next morning at breakfast with his uncle, giving him an account of the gracious reception which he had experienced from Lord Altamont, the servant came and informed him that a young lady wished to speak to him. He immediately went down stairs, and found this young lady to be Mary, who gave him a note from Lady Meeresfield. “ Tell me, Mary,” said he, with eagerness, “ before I open this note, how is your mistress ?”

“ Oh

“ Oh surprisingly well, Sir,” replied Mary, “ considering the extraordinary agitation which your unexpected appearance last night threw my Lady into. There has been nothing, Sir, but sighs and tears from my Lady since you left us. I trust, however, I shall see her once more smile and be cheerful, now she has again beheld you. Ah, Sir, how happy should I feel, but not more I than the whole family, were you once married to my Lady.”

“ I am obliged to you, my good Mary,” said Charles, in a hurried tone, “ for your kind wishes. I must now, however, beg that you will return immediately to Lady Meeresfield,” added he, after running his eye over the note, “ and presenting to her my best respects, say, that I shall not fail to be punctual to the hour of appointment.” Charles then went up stairs to his uncle, and communicated to him the contents of her Ladyship’s note, which were to express the lively pleasure she felt at hearing of the reconciliation that had taken place between her
brother

brother and her favorite, and to inform him it was by his desire she now requested to see him that morning at Altamont House. For our readers are to learn, that before his Lordship had retired to rest, Lady Meeresfield informed him of the alarming effect which the unexpected sight of Charles had produced upon his daughter, and had likewise declared it to be her fixed opinion, that if he did not consent to their union, that Emily would fall a sacrifice to her passion, compounded as it was of so many different sentiments besides love; when, after his Lordship had started a host of seeming objections, he at last, to the inexpressible joy of his sister, pretended that her advice should have his most serious attention.

With a beating heart Charles went to his Lordship, since he justly considered this interview as the critical moment of his destiny. But whatever fears he might have secretly entertained as to the happy result of this meeting, they were presently dispersed by his Lordship receiving him with every mark of

VOL. II. X kindness

kindness and affection. Unused too, as his Lordship was to be natural and simple, or to open the most trifling affair without art or circumlocution, he, for the first time in his life, resolved to have recourse to plain dealing, and accordingly said, "I have requested this interview, Mr. Beauford, for the purpose of expressing my shame at having rewarded the many essential services you rendered me as my private secretary, not only with ingratitude, but with injustice; and likewise to declare the deep sense which I have of your nobleness and magnanimity in defending my character in the House, when he, who was bound by the strongest ties of obligation to have acted your part, so shamefully deserted it. It appears, therefore, to me, that the best atonement I can make for the injuries I have done,—the most precious gift with which I can recompense your talents and virtues, is, the offering you the hand of my daughter."

"Had I a hundred tongues," rapturously exclaimed Charles, while the strong emotions

tions of his delighted soul almost choaked his utterance, " I should fail in conveying to your Lordship a just notion of the joy and transport which I feel at this moment, for what worth can merit such an offer?"

" Your's, my dear Beauford," replied the Earl, cordially pressing his hand, " and from this moment I recognize you as my son. In that character too, I will now tell you, and let the secret be ever confined to your faithful breast, that the female who accompanied you to Craven Hill is no longer my mistress. The poor child was taken off by convulsions a few days after our meeting there, and its unhappy mother then requested from me a provision sufficient to enable her to pass the rest of her life in Wales, her native country, where she retired immediately upon my arranging matters to her satisfaction. This confidence I consider as due to you, both in the double capacity of son and friend; and now I will introduce you to two ladies, who must be all impatience to see you."

The

The Earl then proceeded with Charles to his daughter's apartment. On their sudden entrance, Lady Emily blushed, trembled, and was so lost in confusion, that she could not speak: Lady Meeresfield welcomed her favorite with affectionate warmth. "I bring you, Emily, one," said my Lord, "who has with a true greatness of mind repaid the injustice done him by an act of generosity, which I question if any one else, under similar circumstances, would have performed for me. His merits are as much above my panegyric, as they are above any reward, that I can bestow upon him, unless you allow me to give him your hand, and thus make me the happiest of fathers, as I confidently predict you will then become the happiest of wives."

At this unexpected avowal of her father's sentiments, Lady Emily could not command her feelings, but casting a look of ineffable tenderness on Charles, she threw herself into her father's arms, while she extended her hand, at the same time, to her enraptured lover,

lover, whose voice so completely failed him, that he could only evince his heart-felt extacy by the tears which trickled down his manly face. Lady Meeresfield too was equally affected, and equally incapable to find words at this blest moment ; while, as my Lord strained his daughter to his bosom, he for the first time, perhaps, in his life, entirely lost the politician in the father. A fortnight after this interesting scene, Mr. Colebrooke addressed the following letter from Beechwood Court to his friend Lord Lyndhurst :

“ MY DEAR LORD,

“ There wants nothing but your presence at this princely mansion to complete mine and Charles’s happiness. The marriage ceremony is to be performed on the end of next week. And, as the Earl has determined that his daughter’s nuptials shall be celebrated with great splendour, for he seems fond of parade and magnificence, all here at present is bustle and preparation. His
Lordship’s

Lordship's bounty likewise is to be displayed among other instances, in distributing gifts to his domestics, in apportioning a certain number of young women who are to be married within the year, and giving what he somewhat oddly terms a *peasant's lottery*, all the tickets of which are to be prizes, and to consist of cattle, implements of husbandry, household utensils, and wearing apparel; and the whole of his tenantry are to be feasted in the great hall.

“ As yet, Mr. and Mrs. Eaglehurst, and Louisa and her husband, only are arrived; but there will soon be a crowd of visitors. Nor do I think that one of them will not sympathize with Charles in his happiness; since his elevation has made no change in his demeanour, which is as free from haughtiness and pride, as it was in his former station. The Earl also seems no less warmly devoted to him, and proud of his character, manners, and abilities, than is his beautiful and fascinating daughter. He has signed over to him estates to the amount of ten thousand a-year, and

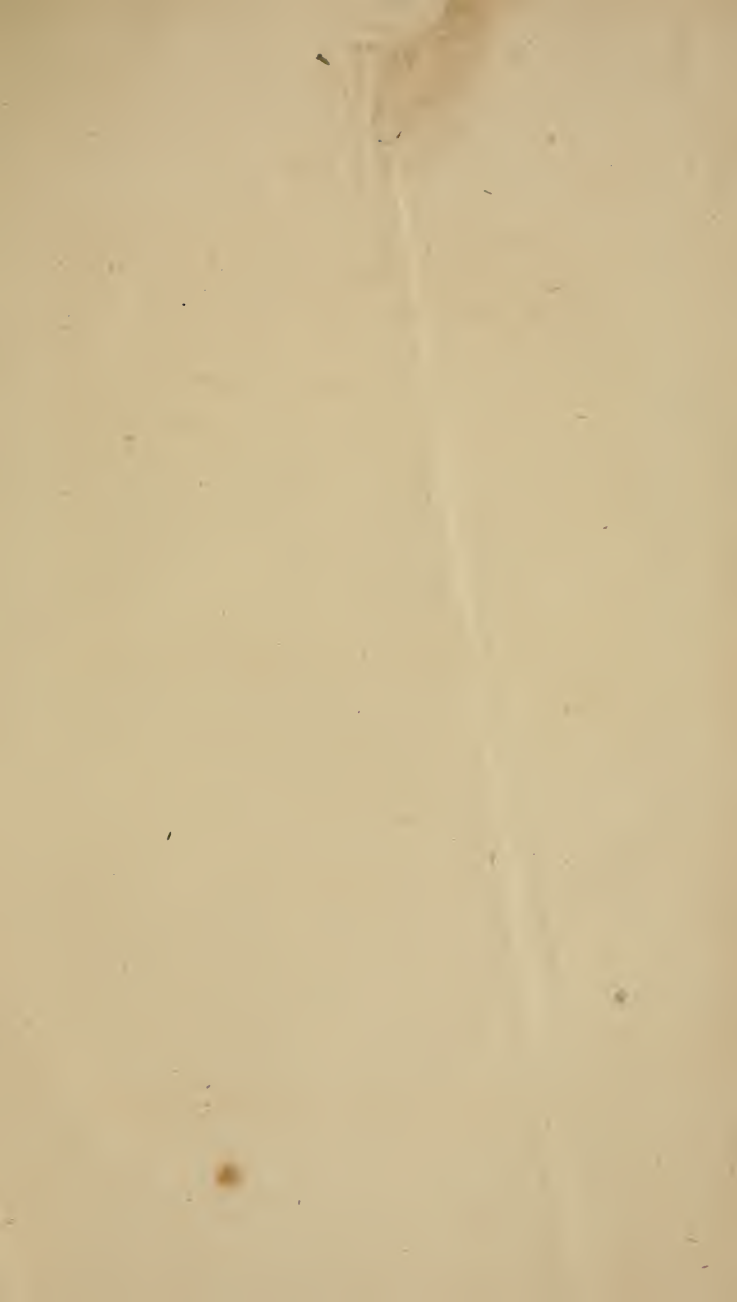
soon expects to obtain a reversionary grant of all his titles to her Ladyship and issue.

Lady Meeresfield's face is so truly expressive of happiness, that the inward disposition is at once made visible by it. She has always loved Charles, I understand, with a kind of maternal affection; and when she embraced his sister yesterday, she could not refrain from whispering in her ear, that this marriage would be the delight of her old age. In short, one may behold, even in the countenances of the domestics of the family, a sort of lively joy at the approaching felicity of Charles and their mistress.

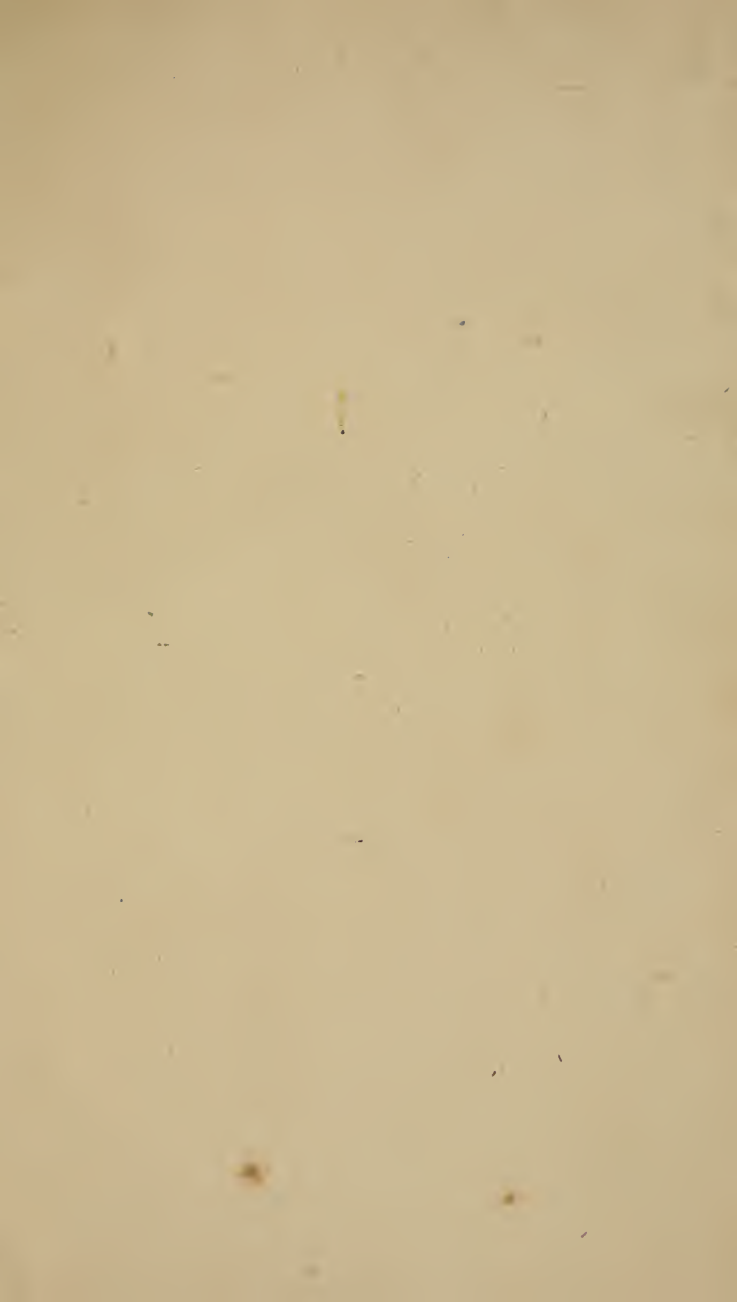
“ It would be strange then, if so reasonable a creature as I take myself to be, did not partake in the general happiness. So great, indeed, is the comfort which it brings to my mind, that I can find employment for most of my leisure hours in the contemplation of it. Full of gratitude to the Almighty for his divine goodness to the two beings so immediately placed under my protection, and

so justly dear to me, I can now in peace and privacy enjoy my days, until I sleep in the tomb of my fathers. May your son enable you to descend to the grave with the like satisfaction. His birth and fortune will guard him from the difficulties and distresses, which at one time so thickly beset Charles; and, when at some future period you shall relate to him the story of my nephew, may he learn from it, among other things, to fix this important conclusion in his mind,—that to depart from Virtue, is to depart from Happiness!”

FINIS.









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